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Chris Capps Firms Up Line

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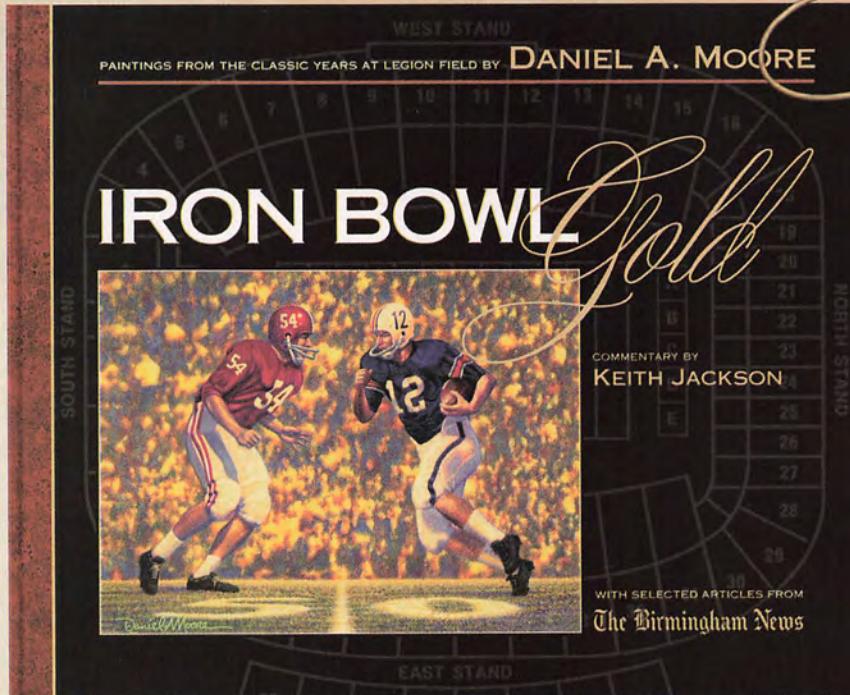
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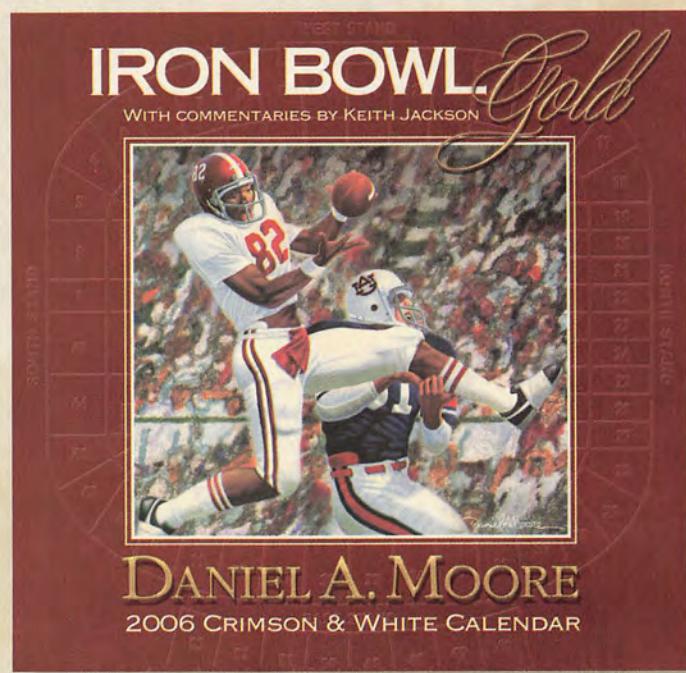
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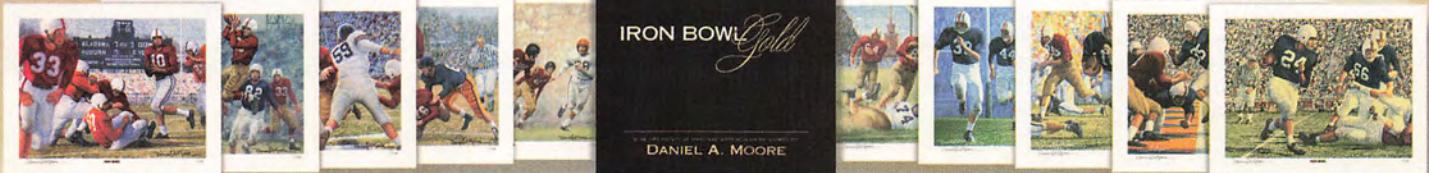
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Dear Fellow Crimson Tide Fans,

Coaches rightfully preach the most important game being the next one. As former Alabama Coach Gene Stallings said, "If you think a game isn't big, just lose it." Nevertheless, from an historic standpoint, all games are not equal.

Alabama football historians can point to a handful of critical victories that made the Crimson Tide one of the nation's best and best-known. As unlikely as it might seem to today's fans, the first great victory for Bama came in 1922, when Alabama went to Philadelphia and defeated Pennsylvania, 9-7. It was almost as big an upset as if this season Alaska-Anchorage had gone to Los Angeles and defeated Southern Cal.

That 1922 Alabama win was so big, it is considered the game that put Southern football on the map.

But some still considered that win to be an anomaly. Bama was still playing a regional schedule as a member of the Southern Conference. In 1925 Alabama went undefeated, outscoring its nine regular season opponents 277-7. And that earned the Crimson Tide a ticket to the Rose Bowl, to take on the Washington Huskies, considered one of the greatest teams of all time. Washington was a prohibitive favorite.

Southerners listened to the play-by-play on radio as Alabama upset Washington, 20-19, to firmly establish Bama as a national team, a reputation that continues today.

In 1959, the second year of the Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant era of Crimson Tide football, Alabama shut out Auburn, 10-0. It would be the first of four consecutive shutouts of the team that had won the national championship and defeated Alabama, 40-0, just two years earlier. The victory re-established Bama as the eminent program in the state and put an exclamation point on the extraordinary rebuilding job underway in Tuscaloosa.

Alabama football had fallen on relatively hard times as the 1971 season approached. Bama had suffered through back-to-back six-win seasons, and among the 1970 loss was a humiliating 42-21 thrashing at the hands of Southern Cal. Alabama had to return the game to Southern Cal to start the 1971 season, and the Trojans were pre-season number one. Alabama unveiled the wishbone offense and a fierce defense that would be the trademarks of Bama football for the rest of the 1970s, defeating USC, 17-10, and once again differentiating Crimson Tide football from most others.

Alabama has forged its history with bowl games and national championships. And Bama has won bowl games to win national titles, including such memorable games as over Nebraska in the 1966 Orange Bowl and Penn State in the 1979 Sugar Bowl.

It may be that the most memorable such win was in the 1993 Sugar Bowl, when Alabama surprised the nation—and certainly the arrogant Miami Hurricanes—with a 34-13 rout to conclude a 13-0 national championship run.

It is too early to say for sure if Alabama's 31-3 win over Florida this year fits into such an historic category, but it may. It was certainly the biggest win to date for an Alabama team under Coach Mike Shula. And because it was attended by so many top prospects—several of whom quickly after announced for the Crimson Tide—it may be a win that will pay dividends for many, many years.

Alabama has had many, many "big wins." And that is part of the reason there will be opportunities for more in the future. ■

Sincerely,
Kirk McNair



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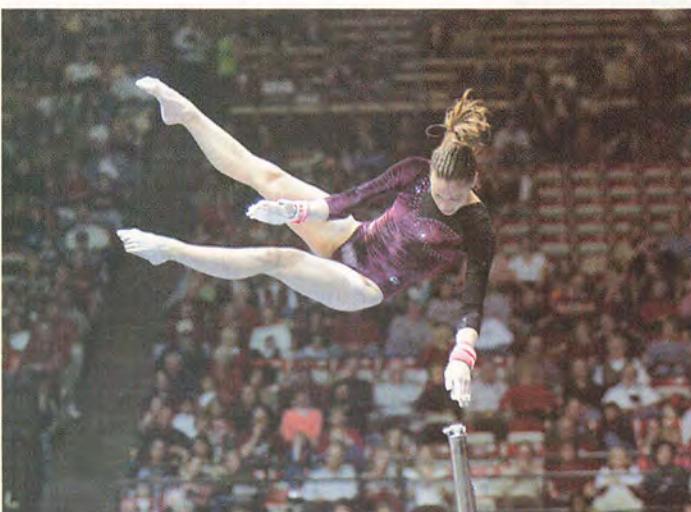
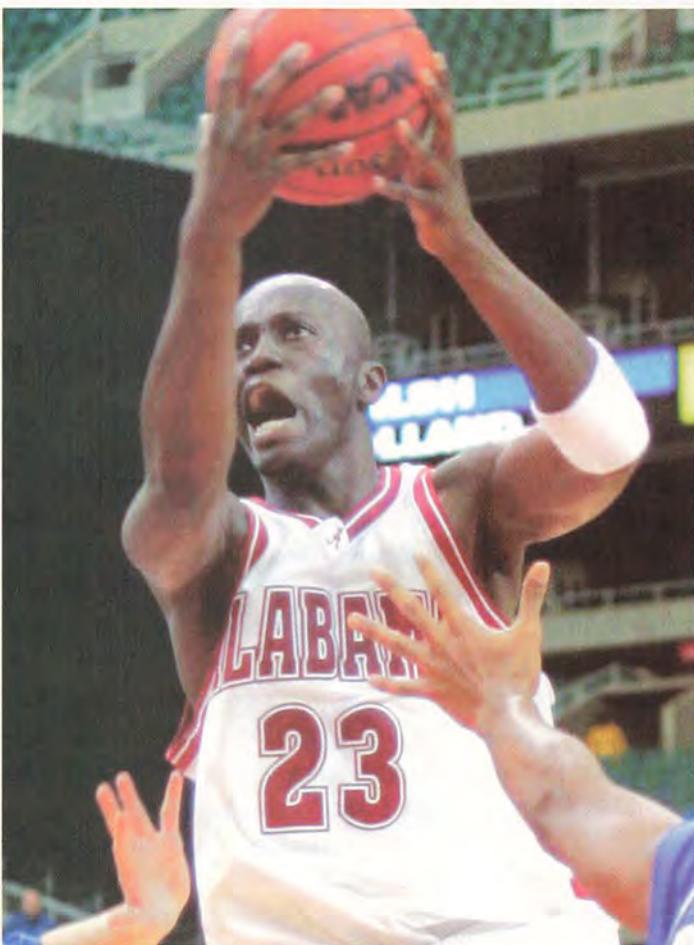
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*Cover Photo of Chris Capps by Kent Gidley
Centerspread Photo of Jean Felix by Kent Gidley*

By Mitch Dobbs

Making The Grade

Offensive tackle Chris Capps improved in every respect

A battered Brodie Croyle wasn't going to cut it. Not this season. Not after the Tide's star quarterback had missed 2004 with a season-ending knee injury and not after he played virtually all of 2003 with broken ribs and a broken left shoulder, which had to be surgically repaired after the year.

After Alabama's 30-21 come-from-behind win over Southern Miss on September 10, where he was sacked three times and knocked down several more by Golden Eagle defenders (sometimes from clean hits and others from not-so-clean ones), there were a lot of unanswered questions about the Tide's offensive line.

Chris Capps was the starting left tackle charged with protecting Croyle's blind side, and more than once Capps could be seen

pounding his fists on the turf as Croyle was being planted by a Southern Miss lineman. Cody Davis, Capps' back-up who had been injured for most of fall training camp, replaced Capps and played most of the snaps.

Croyle said that his offensive line "wasn't as good" as they were in the very well played opening game against Middle Tennessee, when Croyle had lauded their performance and chastised those who had questioned their capabilities.

Capps, who happens to be one of Croyle's roommates, got that message from the look on Tee Croyle's face. He didn't want to face Brodie's mom in a similar circumstance again.

"I feel especially bad if I let him get hit in the game and I come home Saturday night and see his mom. That will make you feel bad," Capps said.

Capps, the six-foot six-inch, 290-pound tackle from Landmark Christian in Jonesboro, Georgia, has learned to take any guff from his roommate in stride by now. When he moved in this past summer Croyle would introduce him to some people as "the guy that's going to get me hit," but Croyle hasn't been hit nearly as often since that early game and Capps is playing the best football of his young career.

"He's playing much more physical football," Tide Offensive Line Coach Bob Connelly said of Capps. "His pass protection has gotten better and he's playing with confidence. He's continuing to work on his weaknesses and I think he's done a great job of taking little steps every day we come out to practice and he's got a great intensity level as far as game preparation and I think he's done a great job in those areas."

Alabama Head Coach Mike Shula conceded that the offensive line, and Capps in particular, had a clear challenge before them entering the year.

"He has come a long way," Shula said. "In general, for me being around young guys watching them grow, his first year was probably typical for young offensive linemen, but there were a lot of question marks in my mind and even last year...but he was showing signs of getting better, and really once the season started and we got out of training camp he made a lot of progress."

Shula was not the only coach who had questions about Capps' capabilities, and it's only because of Mike Price's short stint as Alabama's head coach that Capps is still in the South.

"It was kind of a last minute

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Pretty Dang Good Player

Chris Harris has moved up in Bama defensive scheme

This was how Chris Harris wanted it. Or maybe it was how Dennis Franchione wanted it.

In early summer, 2001, Harris, a strapping defensive end from Tuscaloosa's High School, accepted a scholarship offer from Franchione—and Alabama—becoming the Crimson Tide's first Class of 2002 verbal commitment.

Harris had interest. Lots of interest. From places like Auburn, Georgia Tech LSU, Ole Miss, Mississippi State, Southern Miss and others.

He was a longtime Alabama fan, but few would have blamed him had he poked his head around and looked for a perfect situation, a high school kid trying to make an informed choice.

Few except Franchione himself.

No visits, Fran told Harris. People might get the wrong idea.

"Me being their first commit, Coach Fran told me he preferred me not taking any other visits, because it might impact other recruits," Harris said. "If they see me taking visits to other schools, they might have doubts, wondering why I'm committed and going to visit another school."

So Harris stayed solid. Signed with Alabama.

And before he even played his first snap of college football, Franchione bolted to Texas A&M.

Welcome to Alabama football, Chris.

Over four years after he committed, Harris is finally making an impact in a Crimson Tide uniform.

His interception of a Mark Anderson-

tipped pass sparked Alabama's rout of Florida. And he's increasing his contributions on a deep Tide defensive line.

Life for Chris Harris is, finally, pretty good.

"I feel a whole lot more comfortable than I did the first couple years playing, and I'm getting good game experience," he said. "I'm watching guys ahead of me, and when I go into the game, I'm trying to duplicate what they do."

Harris' Crimson obsession started early.

As a nine-year old, he watched intently on January 1, 1993, as the Alabama defense dismantled Miami in the Sugar Bowl, claiming a 34-13 national title victory.

"After that," he said, "I always told myself I wanted to go to Alabama and get a national championship ring."

Great speed and pass-rushing ability made the first part of his dream reality.

At Central High, Harris dominated. His junior year alone, he had 82 tackles and 17 sacks, vaulting himself onto all of the state's "most-wanted" prospect lists. SuperPrep named him a high school All-America and said he was one of the top 31 defensive linemen in the nation.

He soon found out such hype meant little inside the Alabama football complex. Other talented defensive ends like Kindal Moorehead, Kenny King, Antwan Odom, Todd Bates, Nautyn McKay-Loescher and Mark Anderson were already in the Tide pipeline, and more were on the way.

Harris redshirted in 2002 and played just 72 snaps as a freshman in 2003, making one tackle.

A little hint from defensive ends coach

Paul Randolph changed his career track in a big way.

"He was extremely stiff and inflexible when we first got here, and it was something with his nature, his mindset," Randolph said. "I told him, 'Chris, you've got to get more flexible if you're going to play.' And he goes (off) for one summer, comes back at the end of that summer and he's extremely flexible."

"He's maintained that for the next two years. He's one of those players who you've only got to give a hint of what you need him to get done and he'll do it, so that's a plus for us."

When his flexibility improved, so did his playing time.

As a sophomore, he played in all 12 games, picking up 210 snaps. And he became an integral part of the playing rotation this season.

Some might have been discouraged, but Harris stayed patient, trying to make himself better while staying quiet.

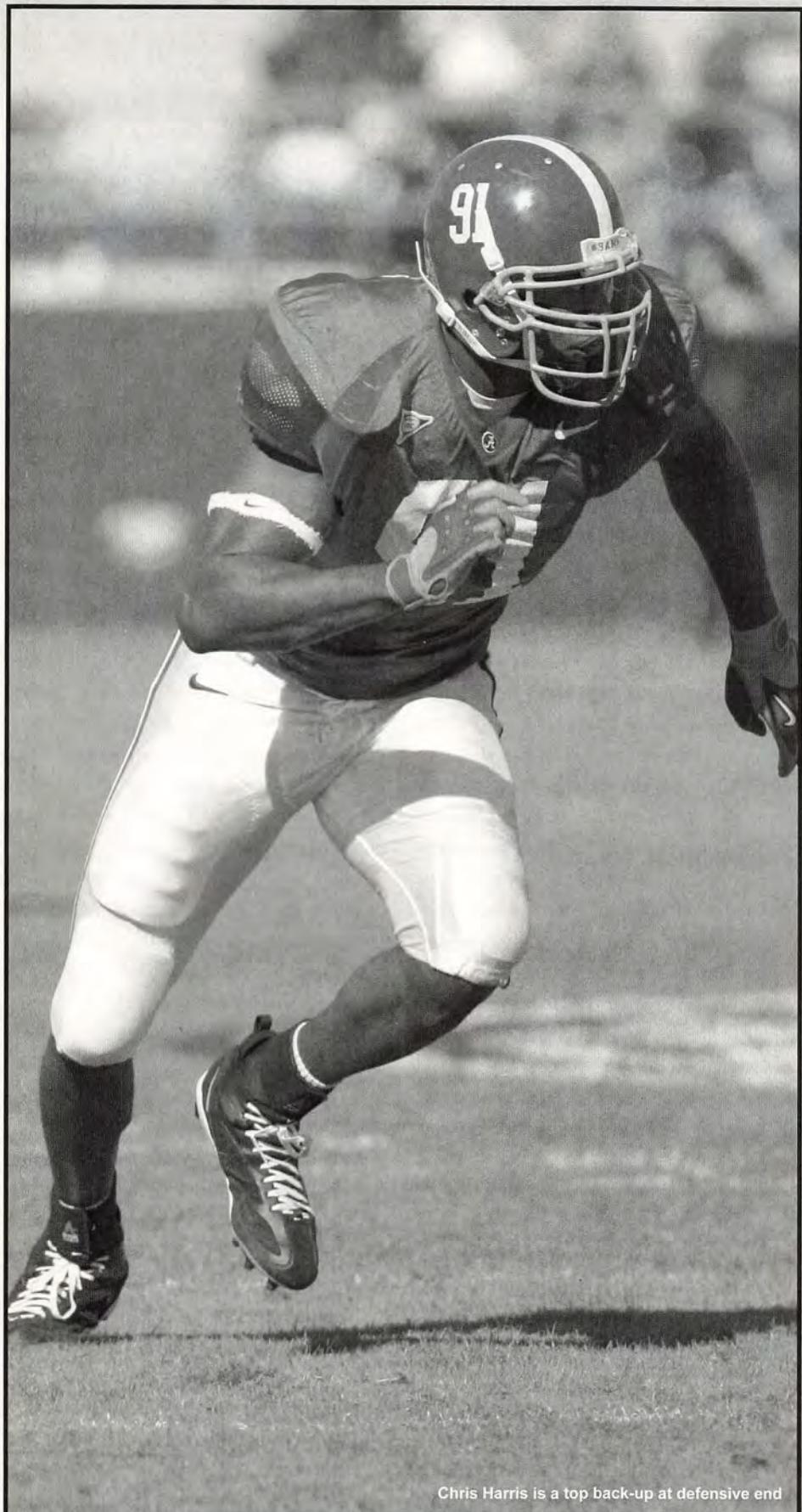
"One of the main things coming in was that I had to put on size and strength," he said. "Pass rushing and playing the run were two things I had to improve on."

Harris' rise, in some ways, mirrors that of the whole program.

Alabama went 10-3 his redshirt year, but slipped to 4-9 in 2003 as NCAA scholarship restrictions, coupled with the effects of the Franchione-Mike Price-Mike Shula coaching carousel, took hold.

Last fall, a host of injuries turned a quick 3-0 start into a 6-6 disappointment.

This year, Alabama's solid defense was



Chris Harris is a top back-up at defensive end

Photo: UofA

"I feel a whole lot more comfortable than I did the first couple years playing, and I'm getting good game experience," he said. *"I'm watching guys ahead of me, and when I go into the game, I'm trying to duplicate what they do."*

joined by a playmaking offense, vaulting the Tide back into the national spotlight.

Harris isn't bitter, although he certainly could be.

"We had a lot of good athletes coming in, a lot that went on to play pro ball, but for some reason over the first couple years, things weren't really clicking right," he said. "We had to go through that adversity and a lot of coaching changes."

If anything, that adversity made Harris tougher. After all, four of the players he says he learned the most from—King, Moorehead, Johnson and Odom—are in the National Football League. Another, McKay-Loescher, plays with the British Columbia Lions of the Canadian Football League.

"Those guys played with great technique," he said. "And I really learned from them."

His coaches have noticed, too.

"Chris has improved since he's been here," said Defensive Coordinator Joe Kines. "We're really proud of Chris. He's a local guy, comes from a great family, Paul Randolph's done a good job with him, and hopefully he'll just keep getting better."

For the soft-spoken, even-keeled Harris, that would be just fine.

"I've been working hard in the off-season and in-season, trying to get better," he said. "When the time comes to play, I'm going to come in and get the job done."

That's just what Harris has wanted all along.

"I think he's gotten to where he understands his role with us," Randolph said. "He's a great person, first of all, and he's a pretty dang good football player." ■

Walk-On Warriors

Non-scholarshipped players live dream of playing for Tide

They call themselves "The Walk-On Warriors." J.P. Adams, Kyle Bennett, Bryan Kilpatrick. Three years ago, almost no one—not even their Alabama coaches—knew who they were.

Now, casual Crimson Tide fans still might not know who they are, but without question the Alabama football team—and its staff—does.

Those three, the only remainders of 2002's 22-man walk-on class, are excellent examples of how the Crimson Tide's walk-on program is paying off in these days of NCAA sanctions, shrinking scholarship numbers, and limited depth.

With little to no fanfare, they and others have survived the climb from absolute anonymity to relative anonymity through hard work, determination, and pure guts.

And even if fans don't know about it, they do—which is good enough for them.

"We've stuck together," Adams, a junior defensive tackle, said recently. "We've got a lot of camaraderie. Once we get scholarships, we congratulate each other. And then we push each other some more."

Alabama entered this season with only 77 scholarshipped players, eight below the Division I-A limit of 85, thanks to NCAA sanctions which stripped 21 scholarships from the program between 2002 and 2004.

A number of those players are former walk-ons, including Adams, senior defensive tackle Rudy Griffin (who transferred from The Citadel), reserve sophomore linebacker Matt Collins and senior punter Jeremy Schatz (who transferred from Troy State).

Many more, including Bennett, a junior fullback, Kilpatrick, a junior safety, redshirt freshman tailbacks Rashad Johnson and Theo Townsend, senior fullback Vic Horn, sophomore placekicker Jamie Christensen, senior flanker Matt Miller (who is the holder on extra points and field goals), senior snapper Drew Lane, and junior punter Jeffrey Aul have been valuable special-teams contributors this season.

"Those guys are key players for us," Tide Coach Mike Shula said, "especially with where we've come from with our scholarships situation."

Their road is never an easy one to travel. Some, like Griffin and Schatz, were ignored by Alabama coming out of high school but had starting roles at smaller schools. Yet they dreamed about playing for the Crimson Tide, and weren't really happy where they were.

As Schatz said earlier this season of playing at Troy, where he was the starting punter: "You get tired of being everyone's homecoming opponent."

So they left scholarships behind for Alabama, where nothing more than a walk-on slot and hope waited.

At least the coaches knew their names, though.

Others, like Bennett, weren't as lucky.

In fall 2002, the Boaz native walked on at Alabama, one of 22 non-scholarshipped players chasing the Southeastern Conference dream. He soon realized the dream was more like a nightmare. Bennett said he called home with thoughts of quitting "two or three times a week."

"And I'd bet if you asked any of (Franchione's) coaches my name right now,

they wouldn't know who I am," he said. "I came in here and none of the coaches knew my name; it's tough. You're just a number out there. You're just number 23 or number 48 or something, so it's tough."

Franchione's departure later that year threw the program into turmoil, but it might have been the break Bennett needed. Shula's staff moved him from linebacker to fullback. And the Shula staff knew one thing, Bennett said. "They know I like to hit."

Boaz High's all-time tackles leader got their attention, and then kept it with constant effort. That's the only way a walk-on can catch a coach's eye, he said.

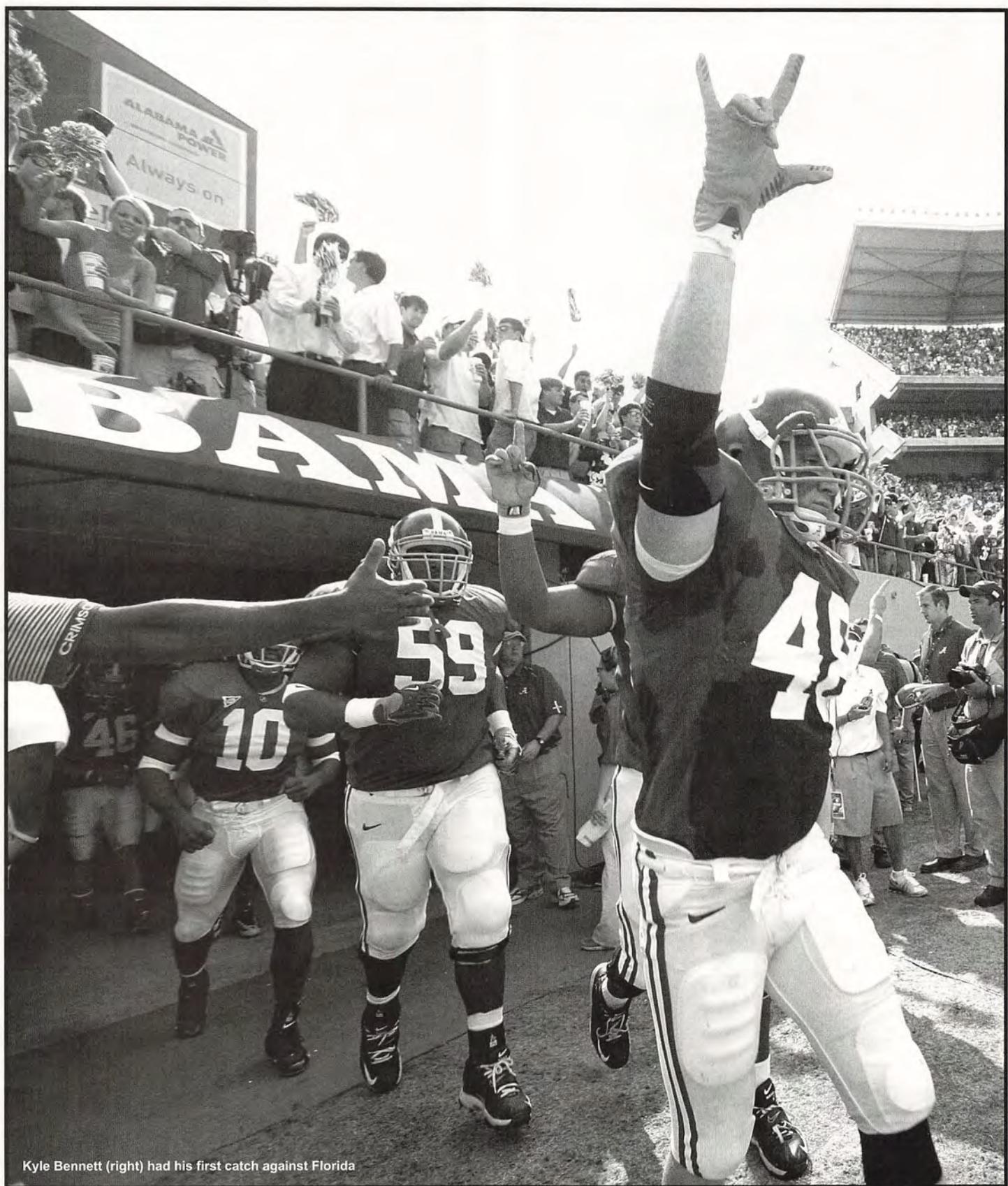
"It's working hard, hitting folks, going all-out every day in practice," Bennett said. "When you're a walk-on, you can't go less than 100 percent. Because every play, you've got to show up on the tape."

Bennett craves the spotlight, but Adams' wrong move in the spotlight cost him dearly.

During his senior year at Tuscaloosa County, the big defensive tackle was attracting serious attention from I-A recruiters. Mississippi State had offered a scholarship. Memphis was "on the verge." Ole Miss had invited him on an official visit, while Troy State and Jacksonville State had also offered full rides.

But in a Class 6A playoff game—with lots of college coaches watching—Adams suffered a serious "stinger," or pinched nerve, in his neck. He sat out the rest of the game, and most of his offers "backed out," he said.

His only options left? Going to Jax State or Troy State, and those just weren't as



Kyle Bennett (right) had his first catch against Florida

Photo: UofA

J.P. Adams

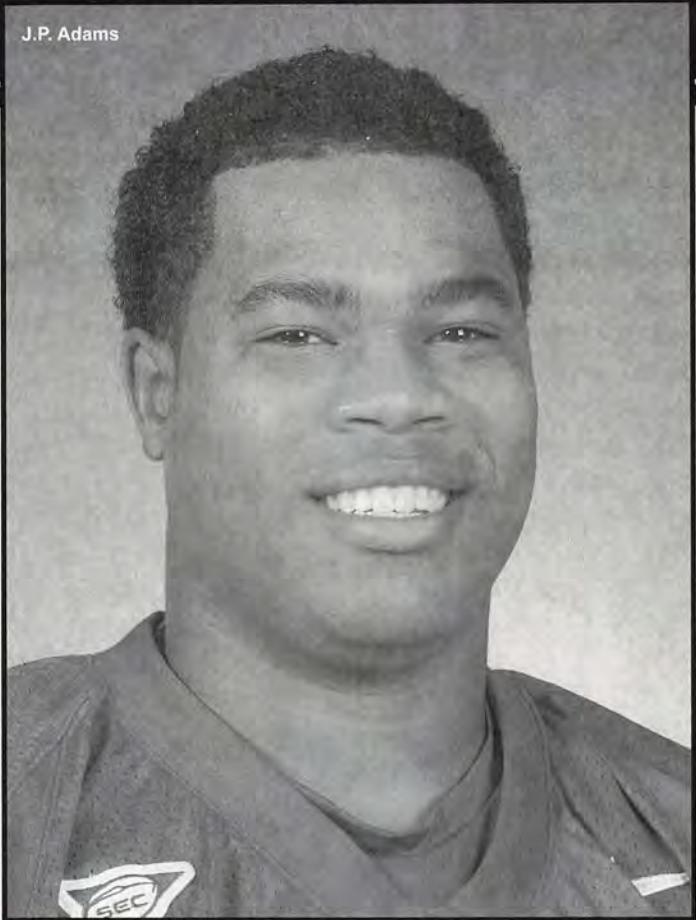


Photo: UofA

appealing as an SEC full ride.

Adams decided to walk on at Alabama, where his father is a professor, and where he'd always dreamed of playing.

"I just wanted to try my hand here at Alabama," he said. "It's always been a place I wanted to go."

Truly achieving his dream, though, wouldn't be quite so easy. It meant lots of scout team work. No road trips. And zero glory.

"There were a lot of down times," he said. "Sitting on the scout team a couple of years, watching the team while I was here at home on TV, it was kind of hard."

So was attracting his coaches' attention.

"It seems like you've got to work harder than scholarship guys," he said. "You can't be equal with a scholarship guy' you've got to be better. I just worked hard out here, tried my best to get on the field."

Adams' breakthrough came in 2003, after his redshirt freshman season. He was given the "Bear Bryant Best Non-Scholarship Player" award after spring practice, an award selected by the coaching staff. And he backed it up by getting in three games that season.

Bryan Kilpatrick

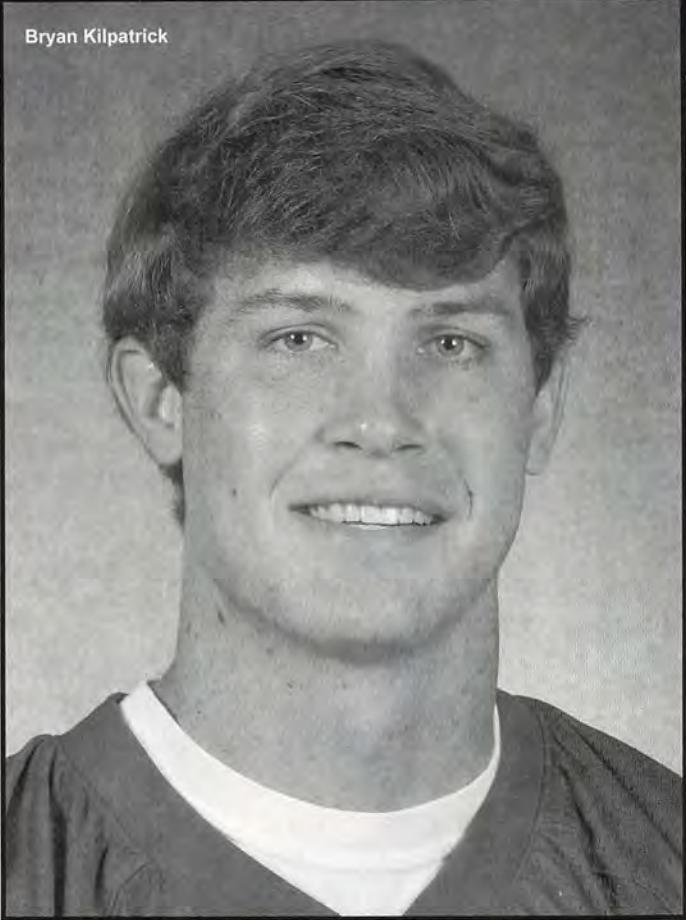


Photo: UofA

The fact that Bama has an award for a walk-on player is proof of how important the non-scholarshipped players are to the Crimson Tide. And even as Alabama builds towards full strength with scholarshipped players, Bama will continue to try to attract non-scholarshipped players to fill out the squad. Undoubtedly, future walk-ons will continue to earn scholarships and help Alabama win football games.

In 1994, the NCAA dropped the number of football scholarships from 105 to 85. That left hundreds and hundreds of players who might have earned scholarships without that aid. It also increased the pool of very good players to be enticed to walk on. It is no wonder that in recent years the non-scholarshipped players have gone from being so-called cannon fodder for the varsity to being serious candidates for playing time and even starting positions. And, of course, they have the opportunity to earn scholarships.

Scholarships can be awarded to a walk-on player at any time. However, if the scholarship is awarded before the athlete has been on campus less than two years,

it must count against the initial limit of 25 scholarships given that year. If the athlete has been on campus two years or longer, the only restriction is that the school cannot have more than a total of 85 on football scholarship.

Just before two-a-days started this fall, Adams' effort was truly rewarded when Coach Shula told him he'd earned a scholarship. Now, he's a regular member of the defensive line rotation.

"It was a goal I'd accomplished, a goal I'd set for myself and I'd finally accomplished it," Adams said of the scholarship. "My parents were happy, I was happy, everybody was happy for me. It was something I'd worked to earn and I'd finally earned it."

And while not every walk-on gets a scholarship—or even makes a huge gameday contribution—those that do know how unique they are.

They're also very proud of their status.

"It was tough, probably the longest road I've traveled, but it was a choice I wanted to make," Adams said. "I knew what the consequences would be coming here and working hard, but this was a choice I made. I wouldn't change it if I could." ■

By Mitch Dobbs

Good Scouts

Tide scout team players look to move up

Suiting up and playing on Saturday afternoons before nearly 100,000 fans is a dream of any high school prospect signing with a major college football program. For the lucky ones, those dreams come true right away. Having talented freshmen contributing at depth-poor positions has been a trademark of Coach Mike Shula's two recruiting classes at Alabama.

Out of the 17 freshmen-eligible signees who were allowed to enroll in 2004, the final year of Alabama's NCAA sanctions, 11 of them played. Bama was allowed to bring in 19 total players in 2004, and two of those were transfers who had already used some of their eligibility.

This season, 10 of the 25 players who came in on scholarship, counting grayshirts and mid-year enrollees, had played in a game by mid-season.

The 15 players Shula planned to redshirt this year moved into a different role. They're on a team no scholarshipped athlete really wants to be on, but every squad has to have. It's the scout team, the group of players whose job it is to mimic the week's opponent and get the first- and second-team players ready for what they should expect to see on Saturdays.

When this year's scout team assignments were doled out around the last week of August there was some disappointment. Scholarshipped players like defensive linemen Lorenzo Washington, Brandon Deaderick, and Brandon Fanney had prospects of making the two-deep and working their way into the game day rotation during the season. Instead, being assigned to the scout team, they had to shed their own

numbers and don jerseys of the player they were to imitate. Their prospects of playing as true freshmen were not dashed, but made considerably less likely.

Some players, of course, love being on the scout team. At Alabama not just any player can walk on even as a practice player. Title IX gender equity, as well as practicality and efficiency, restrict the number of walk-ons a team will take.

Alabama has improved leaps and bounds this year on the field, so much that even the scout teams have Shula encouraged. Shula, his background in offense, spends most of his practice implementing the Tide's offensive game play. Therefore he gets the side benefit of seeing his young defensive linemen.

"By far this is our best group both offensively and defensively," Shula said. "You hear Bob Connelly talking about our scout team defensive line. We know who that is. Lorenzo Washington, Brandon Fanney, Baron Huber is helping us out as a down lineman. Then offensively, Evan Cardwell and Mike Johnson and Scott Deaton.

"Now those guys on scout team are guys you think are going to be your future, whereas the last couple of years I don't think we would have said that."

Deaderick quickly figured out the opportunity he had and has taken full advantage of it.

"You're down there with all the offensive coaches and the head coach is down there. You're working hard in front of him, and he's going to take notice," he said.

As proof, Shula and the Tide staff named Deaderick the scout team player of the week

Scout team player Chris Rogers dresses for games



Photo: UofA

for the Middle Tennessee and Florida games after noticing him during practice.

"Coach Shula's telling me I'm doing a good job," Deaderick said. "He just says keep working, I'm a good pass rusher and I'm going to get a lot of sacks before I leave here. When spring comes that's when I'm going to get my chance to get out of there and get on the field for next season."

"It's to help us get better a little bit but it's really to help the offense get ready for a game," he said. "The defensive scout team will go hard all the time and give them the best look they can for the game so they're prepared."

One man on the verge of getting on the field this year has been center Evan Cardwell. Cardwell, offensive scout team player of the week for Arkansas, splits his time between the scout team and the regular offense.

"There have been more guys this year on the scout team that have gone back and forth," Shula said. "We've pulled them off the scout team and put them back on because we felt they were that close to being ready."

On Tuesdays, Cardwell is a scout, but on Wednesdays and Thursdays he's learning the current week's game plan in order to be an option should something happen to starting center JB Closner.

"It seems pretty tough, but that just means I have to stay up on my Alabama stuff—stay in my book. I get a chance when I go on scout team to break free from that," Cardwell said. "A little stress comes off because I'm just looking at a card and blocking a guy. It gives me the rest of the week to focus on the opponent and get ready to play on Saturday."

Cardwell also has the distinction of facing Rudy Griffin on a day-to-day basis. A former walk-on and member of the scout team himself, Griffin is considered perhaps the most enthusiastic practice player, which is how he became a two-year starter for the Tide. Cardwell has learned the lesson of hard work from all sides.

"Everybody wants to be rotating in with the ones and twos, but everybody's got a role on the team," he said. "That's how it works. If everybody does his job our team gets better. Everybody has to pay his dues. Young guys

Quarterback Jimmy Barnes runs scout team offense as redshirt

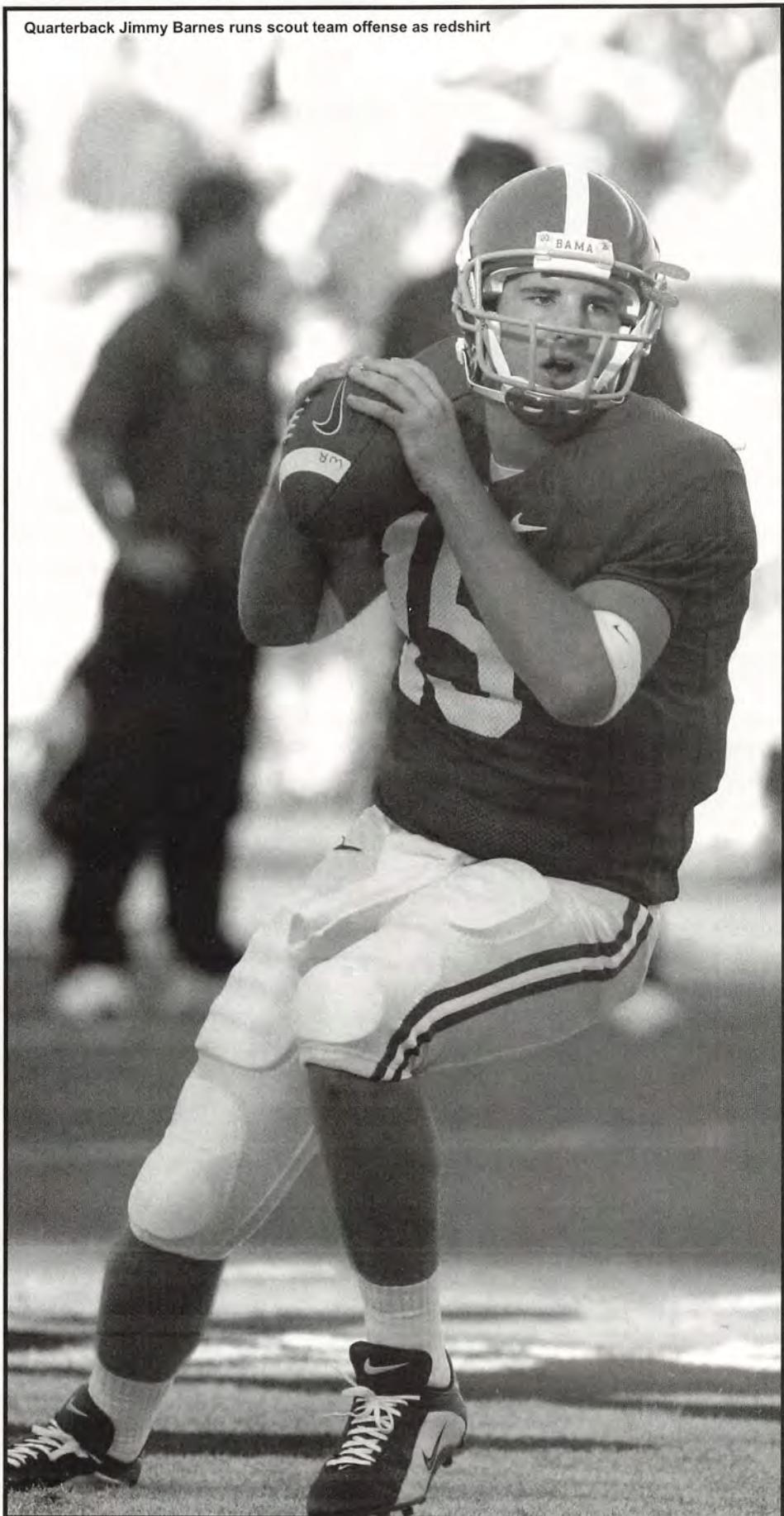


Photo: UofA

are going to have to play the scout team. We can help our defense get better and ultimately help our team get better and win games."

About with mononucleosis sidelined freshman quarterback Jimmy Barnes for a good chunk of the early part of the season, leading him down the path for a redshirt year. Barnes returned to practice at the end of August, but regaining his strength from the sickness took longer than expected.

"He's coming on a little better now," Shula said. "He's done a better job with the scout team and he's throwing the ball well in individual. It's tough because he's not getting any reps. All his, offensively, will come beginning next spring with all the mental stuff."

Barnes has to face one of the toughest defenses in the country every day at practice, and every week he's running a new offense. He doesn't wear the yellow "no-contact" jersey to practice anymore, either. He said he was still off limits for tackling "sometimes. It depends how nice they are to me." There's an upside to Barnes facing DeMeco Ryans, Mark Anderson, Freddie Roach and the like every day, however.

"You're going against the number one defense in America. If you complete some balls against them it makes you feel good inside," he said. "It helps for the spring. It's better for me to get reps out there than standing around watching. It's good to get the reps and work on mechanics and everything else."

Chris Rogers is one of the more outgoing underclassmen on the squad, and the cornerback who was the scout team player of the week against Arkansas, appreciates the opportunities to defend Bama's receivers every day.

"We're getting quality reps and getting better. If you can lock other guys down when you're on the scout team when spring ball comes around you'll be in good position to do your thing," he said. "I feel like I've gotten better as time went on every week and I feel more comfortable. You basically get out of it what you put into it. That's really the truth. If you go around and play around with it you'll be on scout team for two or three years. You've got to get off it. You've got to get some status."

Huber, running back Theo Townsend, linebacker Prince Hall, quarterback Trent Dean, receiver Darwin Salaam and offensive lineman Layne Rinks have all been recognized as scout team player of the week.

Offensive Graduate Assistant Coach Danny Kimble and Defensive GA David Reeves work closely with the scout team. They are in meetings with the coaches as the opponent game film is being dissected on Saturday, Sunday and Monday preparing their scout team's practice plans. The offensive GA instructs the defensive scout team, and vice-versa.

"All the film I see is of our opponents' defense, therefore it gives me a better understanding of what type of defense they're going to be running," Kimble said. "We take it real seriously. Those guys realize that they have a role to play on this team and this year that's their role. It takes everyone doing everything right to be successful. They take pride in it and they do a real good job."

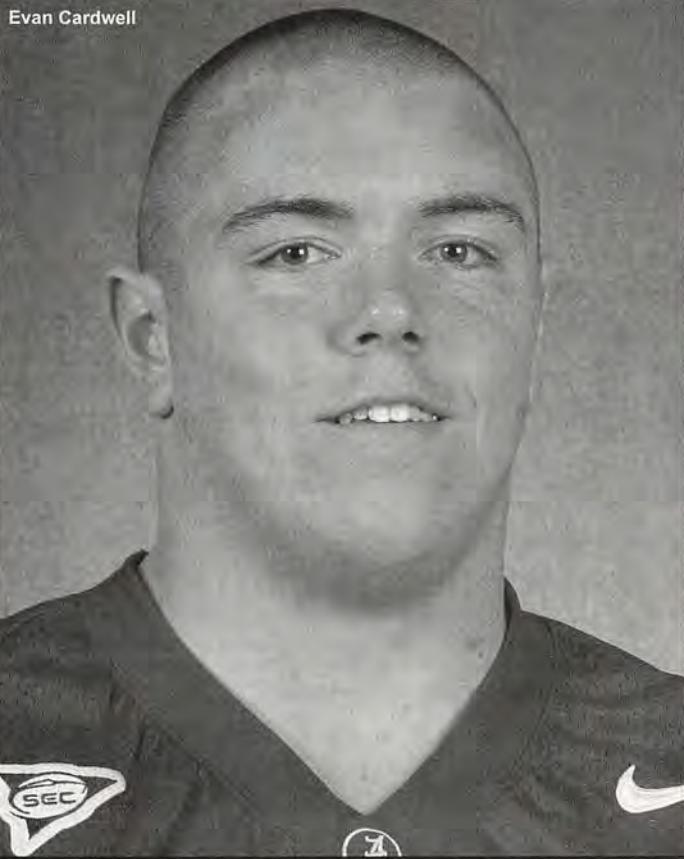


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Where Are They Now?

Billy Neighbors, all-time Tide great, not slowing down

It was nearly impossible to stop Billy Neighbors in the early 1960s. More than 40 years later, it's still hard to stop him.

Neighbors, a 65-year-old former All-America lineman for the Crimson Tide, is a dedicated broker for Wachovia Securities in Huntsville. Even though the name on the front of the building has periodically changed—switching from Kohlmeyer to Thomson McKinnon to Prudential to Wachovia Securities—Neighbors has been working in the same office for 38 years. And working extremely hard.

While many men his age have retired to the golf course, the mountains, the RV or the beach house, Neighbors continues to plug away, putting in between 50 and 60 hours a week at the office. The tireless ex-football player has no plans to join the retirement population any time soon either.

"I don't want to retire right now, so I'm not going to do it," he said. "In this business, you don't have to retire at any certain age. My plan is to work here another 10 to 15 years if I live that long."

As a financial advisor, Neighbors recommends to people how to best invest their money. He factors in age, income, propensity to take risks and the age a client plans to retire. Boredom on the job is one thing Neighbors never has to worry about.

"Every day is a new day," he said. "It's sort of like playing football. It

changes all the time. You have different situations, big-time challenges and it's complicated and hard to understand. There's not anything easy about it. You have to work hard to be any good, and football is the same way. I guess that's the reason I like it."

Work, though, is just one part of Neighbors' life. He and wife, Susan, who have been married for 43 years, still enjoy playing tennis together and also take regular trips to their condominium in Destin, Florida. Sometimes they bring their sons, Wes and Keith, daughter, Claire, their respective spouses and all their kids with them. Billy and Susan have seven grandchildren.

"The whole family is doing great," Neighbors said. "They all live within two miles of us, which makes it easy for us to get to see them when we want to. We go watch them play sports. We're lucky to have them that close to us."

In addition to watching his grandkids play ball, Neighbors makes time to travel to Tuscaloosa, too, to see his alma mater in action. He attends the majority of Alabama's football games and likes the direction the football program is headed.

"I think Coach (Mike) Shula is doing a good job myself," said Neighbors, whose son, Wes, was Shula's center in the mid-1980s.

Neighbors knows a little bit about good coaches, too. He played for the one who's considered by most to be the greatest ever—Paul "Bear" Bryant.

In fact, Neighbors was part of Bryant's first freshman class in 1958. Four years later, as seniors, that class helped Bryant win the first of his six national championships at Alabama, culminating a three-year run in which the Tide lost a total of just three games—none of them at home. The national championship team in 1961 gave up a mere 25 points all season.

"You can't do much better than that," Neighbors said of his three-year career.

With Alabama having gone 4-24-2 the three seasons prior to Bryant's arrival, one would assume playing for a new coach like Bryant, who had a reputation for winning, would be a dream come true. Players, however, who experienced first-hand what it was like to play for Bryant those first two years didn't always feel so lucky.

"He was pretty rough, and he wasn't too friendly those first two years," Neighbors said. "He didn't take too much off of anybody. He was pretty demanding. Those first two years he about killed all of us, but by my junior and senior years he started to not work us as hard during the week because we were playing both ways on Saturdays. Plus, by that time, I think he had us where he wanted us. He wasn't a stupid football coach. He knew how good of a football team we had become even if we didn't know."

So what was it that made Coach Bryant so great?

"I quit trying to figure that out about

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20 years ago," Neighbors said. "He just had something other people don't have. And he had a lot of it. I played for two other coaches in the NFL, and they were nowhere near Coach Bryant. Coach Bryant just had a way of motivating players better than anybody else. He was a different dude."

If there was one player back then who didn't need too much motivating, it was Neighbors, who played both offensive and defensive tackle for the Crimson Tide.

"Billy worked as hard as anybody," said former teammate, Benny Nelson, who was two years behind Neighbors. "He was one of the stars of the team for sure but he was a hard worker. He set a great example for the rest of us."

The hard work, coupled with Neighbors' natural physical talent, paid off. Neighbors earned All-America honors in 1961 and won the Jacobs Award as the best blocker in the SEC. He was later selected to Alabama's Team of the Century, and, in 2003, was inducted into the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame.

"Billy was a great football player," said another former teammate, Lee Roy Jordan. "He was such a great blocker. He moved with extreme balance and quickness, and it seemed like he could block people much lower than anyone else. He was also an excellent leader."

Not as effective, evidently, was Neighbors' memory. Nelson still laughs recalling a game against Auburn in 1961 when Coach Bryant dropped Neighbors back into a linebacker position, forcing him into some pass-coverage assignments.

"Anytime anybody on our defense intercepted a pass, that person was supposed to yell out, 'Bingo!' so the rest of us would know to stop playing defense and start looking for someone

Billy Neighbors was Alabama All-America



Photo: UofA

to block," Nelson said. "Well, in that particular game, Billy intercepted a pass, but he forgot what the word was to yell out. Instead, he just hollered out, 'Help!' We finally realized what he meant to say and started blocking people."

After completing his career at The Capstone, Neighbors spent eight years playing professional football—four with the Boston Patriots and four with the Miami Dolphins. The heavy physical toll on the body ultimately forced Neighbors out of the sport.

"I had been knocked out a couple of

times, I had a bad back and I had had two concussions," he said. "That was enough for me."

Neighbors, who actually got a head-start on his new career as a broker during his last two off-seasons in the NFL, went to work full-time in the brokerage business after retiring from the NFL. Little known, however, is the fact that his career path might have been vastly different had Bryant gone through with his decision to coach the Miami Dolphins in the early 1970s. Bryant had asked Neighbors to be on his staff at Miami, and Neighbors

was going to do it—reluctantly.

"He ended up changing his mind and staying at Alabama," Neighbors said of Bryant. "I'm glad he did. I really didn't want to do it, but I would have done it for him."

Although his only connection to football now is that of a fan, Neighbors still savors the fact that he got to live out his dream of playing for the Crimson Tide.

"It was the thrill of my life," said Neighbors, who, as a teenager, worked in the Denny Stadium concession stand during Alabama games. "Playing for Alabama is what I always wanted to do, and I got to do it. That's special to me. Not everybody gets to do what he wants to do in life."

Neighbors also appreciates the life-long, positive effect playing the sport had on him.

"I learned to be humble, to work hard, to treat people with respect, and to always do the best you can and try and go that extra mile," he said. "Football is a great sport because it teaches you about the ups and downs of life and it teaches you discipline. Things don't always go well in games, but you need to learn to overcome, and that's how the real world is. Football isn't about trying to make it to the NFL—it's about the team concept. Coach Bryant was a genius when it came to teaching that."

Jordan, for one, isn't surprised that Neighbors has continued to be a

success in life, long after his playing days at Alabama have past.

"Billy has focused on the areas he wanted to focus on in his life, and he's applied the lessons Coach Bryant taught us," Jordan said. "Billy has turned out to be the best he can be—which is very good." ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: Billy Neighbors is one of 62 former Alabama football players who tells his story of "What It Means To Be Crimson Tide," with foreword by Gene Stallings. 'BAMA Editor Kirk McNair is author of the book, which is available for \$27.95 plus tax (if applicable) and shipping and handling by calling (205) 348-6084. Autograph by Kirk McNair is available.

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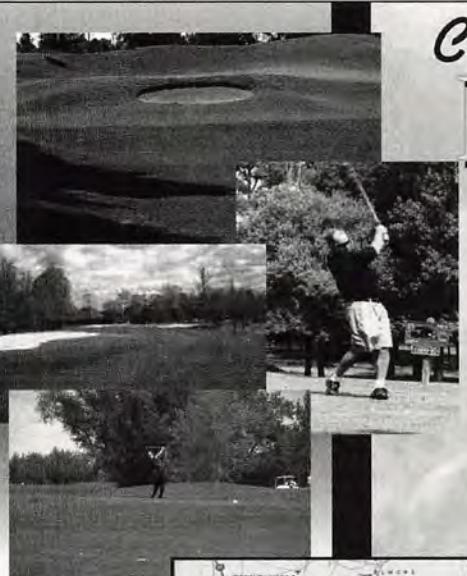
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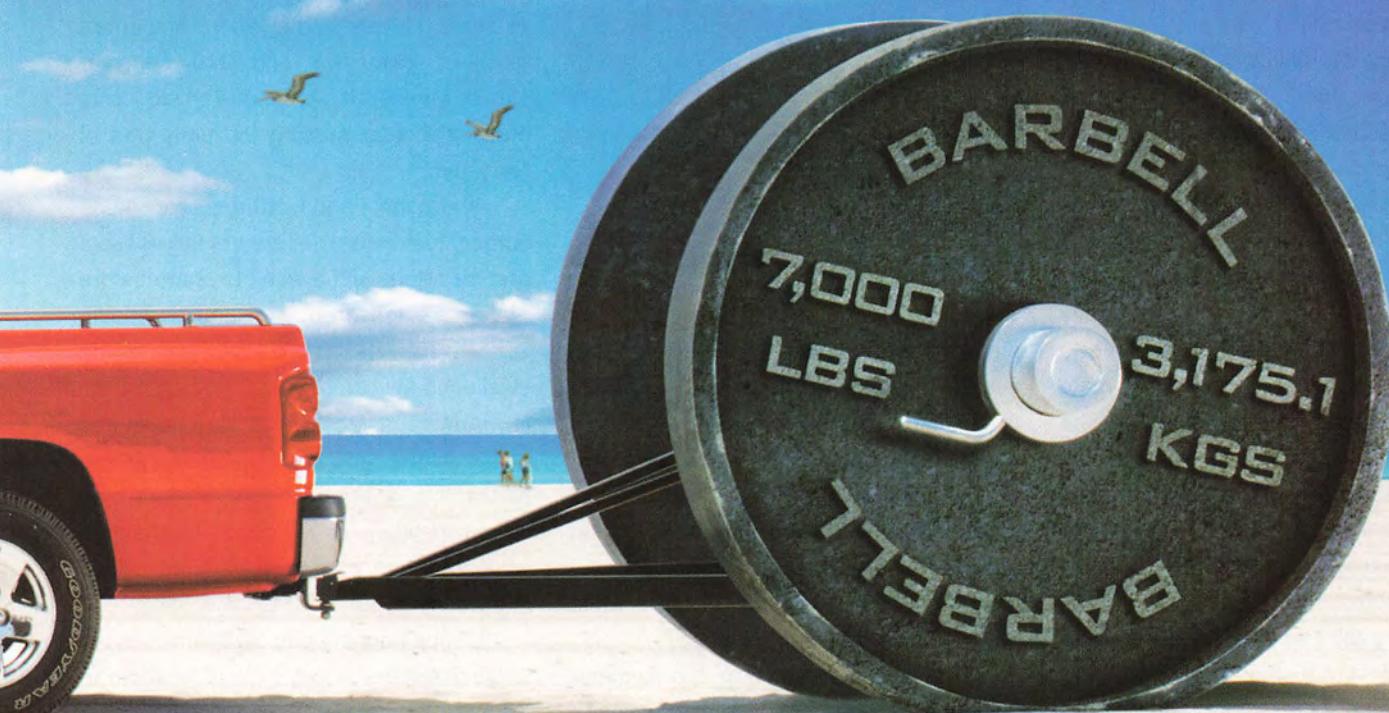
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deal," Capps said of how he ended up at Alabama. "Coach Fran (Dennis Franchione, Bama's head coach in Capps' senior year, 2002), I guess, I really didn't fit their offense."

Capps got a highlight tape into the hands of Price's staff, and Tide Running Backs Coach Sparky Woods picked up the trail. "I was actually already committed to Oklahoma State. I had been on my visit out there and decided that was going to be the best school for me," Capps said. "And then Alabama came calling."

Ironically, the timing of Capps' arrival at Alabama occurred after all the upheaval at The Capstone, and helped him to avoid a coaching change that took place at Oklahoma State. LSU Head Coach Les Miles, now in his first season at LSU, was then in charge at Oklahoma State.

"That was interesting, and pretty funny, actually," Capps said. "He came to the house with his O-line coach. My mom asked him if some other job came up if he would leave Oklahoma State. He said, 'Oh, no, I'll be his coach all the way through.' And now he's at LSU. But he wished me the best of luck when I told him I wasn't going out there."

Not only did Capps have a long way to improve on the football field this fall, he had a long way to go simply to have the opportunity to be there. When Alabama met in Nashville for Music City Bowl practice last December, Capps wasn't there. Alabama was bowl eligible for the first time in three seasons, but Capps was not. Capps had planned on getting a degree in engineering, but his grades suffered as he tried to balance the difficult curriculum with his strict football regimen.

"It was kind of like an, 'I told you so,' deal with Coach Connelly," Capps said. "I tried to do engineering and I ended up getting some classes I couldn't handle with football. It was mostly my fault but he wasn't too hard on me."

Capps started towards a financial



planning degree in the spring semester of this year. Twelve hours is considered a full-time class schedule, but Capps passed 18 hours in the spring to get himself eligible.

"I really learned that it takes a lot of effort," Capps said. "You can't stand around and wait for everything to happen for you. It was hard on me. It's something I would never want to happen to anyone."

Twelve more hours in the summer put him back ahead of pace academically. Capps said he made As and Bs and brought his grade point average up, too.

"His back was up against the wall," Shula said. "He had a lot on his plate because of a slow start last year."

Alabama's veterans on the offensive line were pushed around by Minnesota in the Music City Bowl, and afterwards, replacing three senior starters (two of whom are currently in the NFL) with three players with no significant college football experience was a downright scary proposition.

Connelly, Shula, and Strength Coach Kent Johnston had no time to spare.

"I wasn't there, but when we got back Coach Connelly challenged us in our winter

workouts saying you young guys are going to have to step up," Capps said. "We didn't wait until spring."

Shula didn't make a public comment about the offensive line without stressing their need to get stronger, and Johnston developed a program specifically for that affect as an addition to their normal workouts.

An aspect of football practice that is frequently overlooked is through the grind of pre-season work, one player's triumph is almost always another's setback. A perfect example of this came when Alabama's excellent defensive end and two-year starter, Mark Anderson, made an explosive comeback after missing the early part of fall camp.

Anderson had arthroscopic knee surgery just before the start of the season, and his return with a week to spare before Alabama's season opener against Middle Tennessee was a hot topic during the sweltering fall camp.

Anderson recorded a sack in limited action in the Tide's final scrimmage. He hadn't lost a step. Anderson picked up more repetitions as the game approached while coaches bragged and pronounced him "ready to go!" during game week.

Capps happened to be the man trying to block Anderson in his quest to return to the same devastating pass-rushing form he had established in his junior season and in the spring of 2005, and he received first-hand knowledge of Anderson's readiness.

"It was one of the first few days that Mark Anderson was back from his injury and he was just wearing me out," Capps said. "Brodie was getting on me pretty good about that. I remember that day pretty well."

When a right handed quarterback's left tackle gets bum-rushed, everything is disrupted and timing in the passing game is the first thing to go. Croyle didn't take it lying down.

"I don't even remember what he was saying," Capps said, "just yelling at

me. He'd go into the huddle and call a pass play then he'd say, 'Capps! Block the end!'

As Anderson was making his comeback felt on Capps, Shula had been hoping Cody Davis would strike up a competition for the starting left tackle spot at the beginning of fall camp, but that didn't happen. Davis injured a hamstring in the summer, and re-injured it during the first week of practice, causing him to miss most of August.

When it finally happened, the instant competition was like flipping a light switch. "When Cody Davis got better, and we created a little competition there, Capps played better," Shula said.

Not that Capps wasn't trying his best in practice during the fall, but the urgency was missing. "Cody was hurt and it didn't put a lot of pressure on me," Capps said.

No pressure, that is, until the Sunday after that woeful performance in the Southern Miss game, when Capps was demoted to second-team.

"Whether it's right or wrong, good or bad, I really believe the competition has them all motivated," Connelly said. "This is the first time since I've been here where there are some guys out there that are looking over their shoulders knowing that someone else is after that same position. I think that is a great motivator in us all, when we know if we don't show up to work every day and do the things that we're asked to do, somebody else is going to get the job done if we can't."

"That's definitely the case with Chris Capps. He got a little scare with Cody Davis early on and he took it personally and he came out to work. He's taken it and run with it."

Capps wound up starting the next week against South Carolina, and has started every game for the Tide so far this year.

"I ended up starting, but I didn't know that I was going to start until Friday,"

Capps said. "I was second string all week and then Friday when we went through our walk-through there in the indoor practice facility, Coach Connelly told me that I was going to start. I had a good week of practice; probably my best week of practice ever."

That doesn't mean the battle between Capps and Davis, a redshirt freshman, is over. In fact, it has been just the opposite.

"My goal is to have both of those guys playing," Connelly said. "I want both of them playing well and playing with confidence. As we all know, this is a very physical football game. Injuries do

happen and I want them both physically and mentally prepared."

Capps, steadied by center JB Closner, Croyle, and other Tide veterans, is doing whatever it takes to avoid any more complacency

"It just feels different. We've got excitement, confidence. We feel like we know what we have to get done," Capps said. "We're taking a step forward this year. For me, it's big because I'm out there playing this year. It's huge for me. There's always more to do. There's always room for improvement. That was a goal we set, to prove who we are and earn respect." ■

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By Kirk McNair

Key To Success

Bama basketball counting on Jean Felix

Most Alabama basketball fans didn't know much about Jean Felix when he joined the Crimson Tide last season from Bevill State Junior College in Sumiton. In fact, there were questions about his name and his origins. But Felix quickly became a crowd favorite with his wide-open style of offensive and defensive play.

Confusion was possible in part because:

- Although he requested to be known as Jean Felix, his full name is Jean Felix Moupegnov Boussiengue.
- He came to Alabama via Bevill State, and before that played at Central Park Christian School in Birmingham. Before coming to Alabama, he spent a year in Paris. And he is a native of Pointe-Noire in Congo-Brazzaville in Africa.

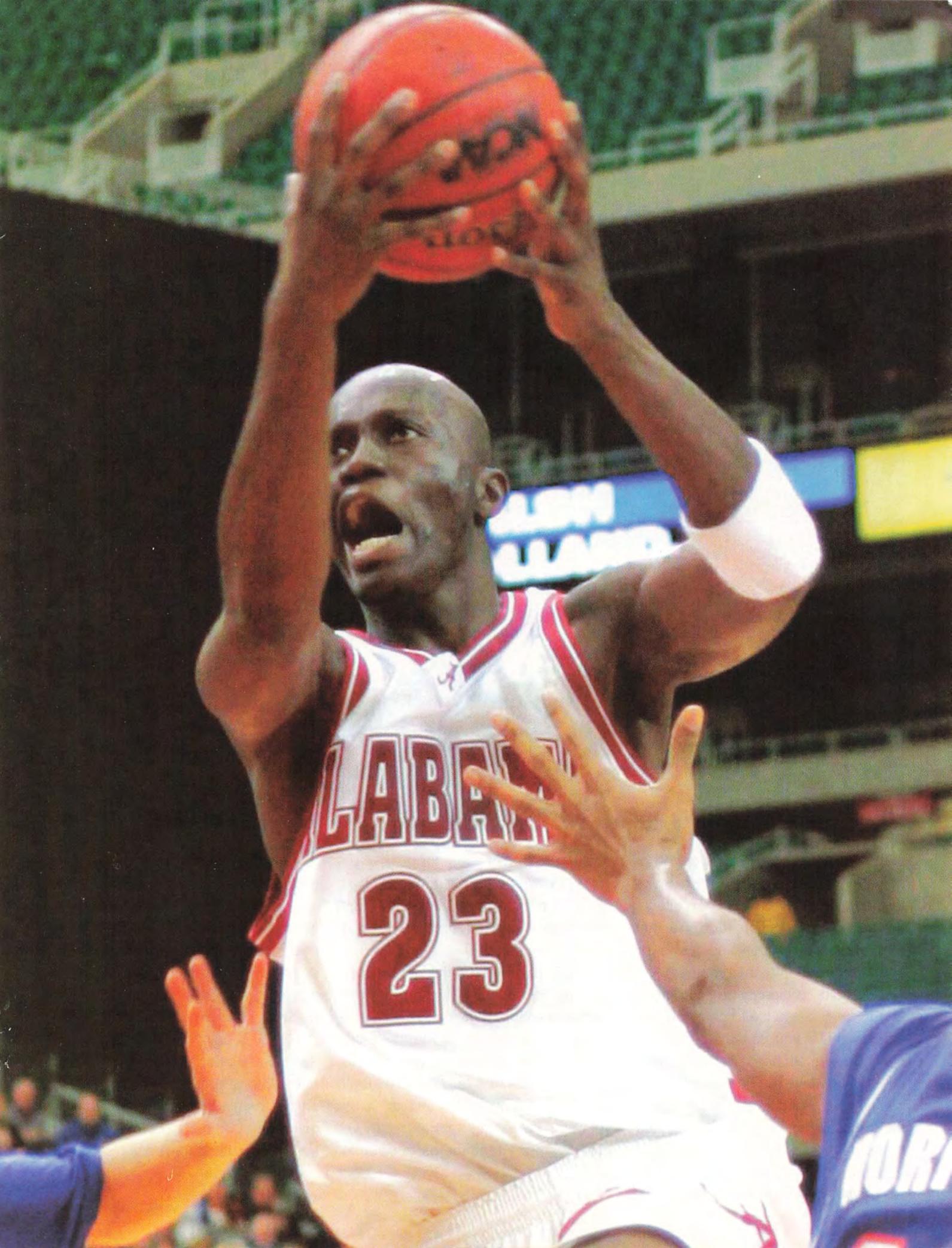
French is the language of his native country, which made the move to Paris (where his uncle was stationed as a diplomat) fairly easy. Now he is "pretty much" comfortable with both French and English.

And he is particularly comfortable on a basketball court. Last year Felix was one of the first players off the bench for the Crimson Tide. This year, his senior season, the 6-7, 213-pound wing player is expected to step in to replace Kennedy Winston, the All-Southeastern Conference player who elected to pass up his senior year at Bama in hopes of playing professional basketball.

"Jean Felix is a big key for us," said Alabama Coach Mark Gottfried. "There's no secret to that. His level of play will determine to great extent the success of this team. We've got a lot riding on him. I think he will emerge as a very good player. He needs to be more consistent."

Felix said, "When you go





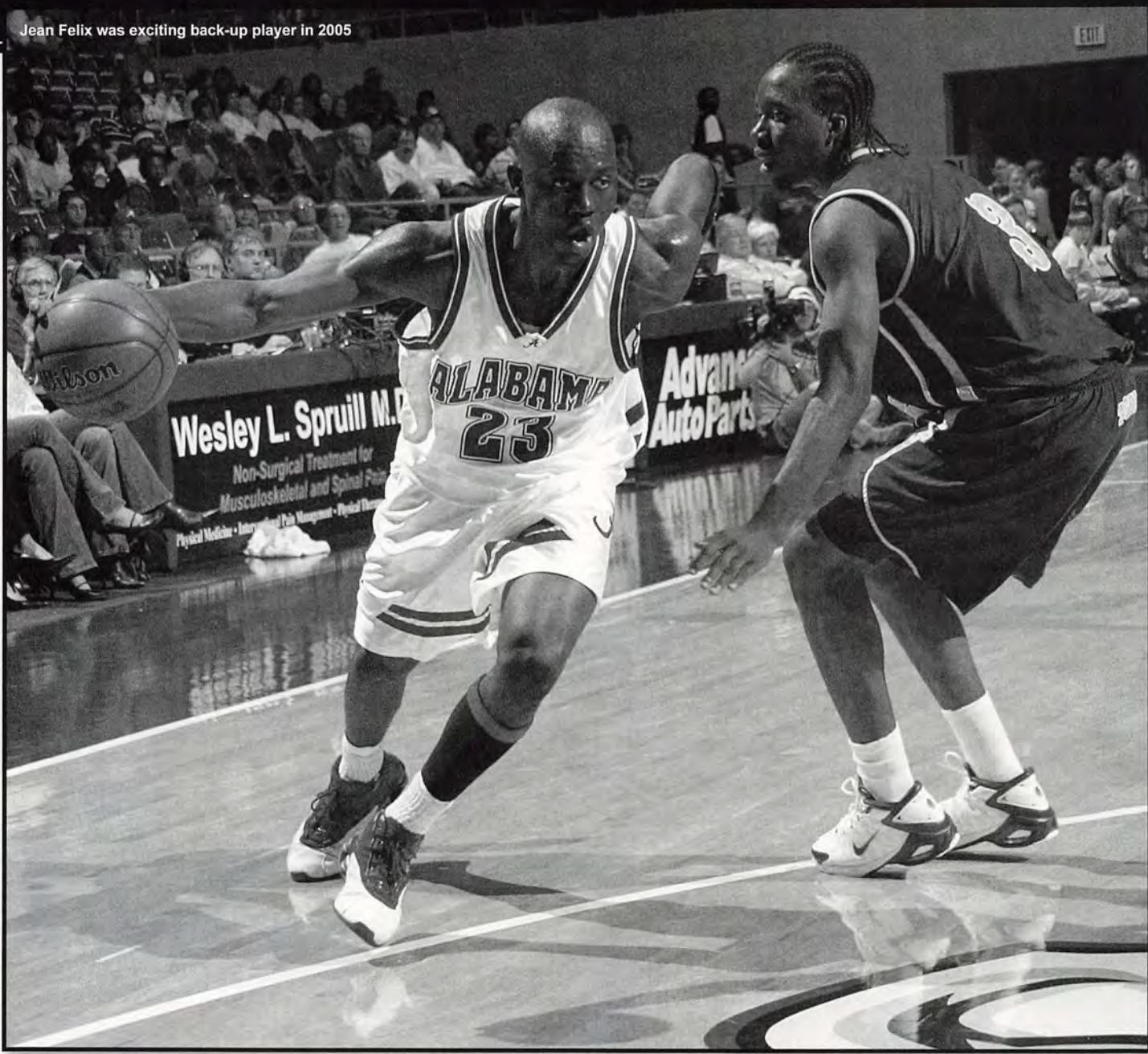


Photo: UofA

somewhere new, there is a period of adjustment. Last year I had to make the adjustment from junior college. It was a big transition, but one that was made easier because I was so comfortable with my teammates."

He said he didn't worry too much about the basketball part of the adjustment. "If you can play, you can play. Basketball has been my sport for a while. I love the game and hope I can play for a long time. The Lord gave me the ability and it is fun to play. And if one day I can make a living playing

basketball, that is good, too."

Felix, who wears number 23, had his 23rd birthday on October 17, just after Bama opened practice for the 2005-06 season.

Felix appreciates the opportunity he has to replace Winston in the Alabama lineup. "It is a huge hole and a huge responsibility for me," he said. "I know everyone will be watching to see how I measure up. But basketball is a team game. You can't do it by yourself. I'm going to bring all I've got. I want my teammates to be able

to count on me, and I will be counting on them."

He said he is comfortable at the wing spot. "I can play inside in a one-on-one situation, because I played inside earlier in my career. It is just a matter of posting him up. It is part of the game to be able to play in different spots."

Felix enjoys defense, too. "Defense is a part of the game I love so much," he said. "I like to be aggressive on defense. I try to be constantly on my man. I know it comes back to scoring and people always check

scoring averages, but you can excite people—particularly with steals and blocked shots—and help win games with defense.

"Still, I know, it comes back to scoring."

Gottfried said, "I think Jean can score, but we won't depend on our wings for as many points as Kennedy and Earnest (Shelton) gave us last year. But I think Jean Felix can be one of the best defensive players in the country. He was good last year with limited minutes. He has a chance to be a great defender."

Last year Kennedy led the Tide in scoring at 17.9 points per game, and increased that to 19.1 points per game in Southeastern Conference play.

Felix said he knows that Alabama fans remember him for two things. One is his long-range jump shots. "What comes out is what you work on," he said. "As long as I have been playing I have worked on the long jumper. I love the trey."

The other is his cartwheel against Ole Miss in the first round of the SEC Tournament last year. Felix hit a long jumper from the corner, then started back up court on defense. He lost his balance and in recovering turned a cartwheel that looked like a celebration of his field goal.

Felix said, "I saw that on TV and said, 'Was that me?' It was just a quick way to get back on defense."

Felix is aware of the "shooter's zone," and enjoys being in it. "You can feel it," he said. "That's when there is nothing to do but shoot, because the ball is going in. You get open and you have the ball, and you think of nothing but shooting, although you have to still make sure you have a rebounder. You don't want to shoot in a one-on-three or something like that."

He said players enjoy the up-and-down, one-on-one game. "But," he

said, "you have to be prepared to play in the halfcourt game, too, when the game slows down."

Gottfried said, "I think the more minutes he gets the better he will become. He has things to learn. Last year he had to learn what constitutes a good shot. That's all part of learning how to fit his game into our system. I think he will get more comfortable as he gets more minutes."

Felix said this will be an important year for him because of Alabama having lost Winston and Shelton. "I have worked hard and I believe I am ready for the challenge," he said. "I think we will have a fun and exciting team. The new guys have fit in well."

He said, "I think we have a group of guys who will do the job. We respect everyone we play, but I think everyone respects Alabama basketball, too."

Felix played in 29 of Alabama's 32 games last season, averaging 13.3 minutes per game and 5.6 points and 2.6 rebounds per outing. He had season high games of 13 points, against East Tennessee State and at Mississippi State in the regular season finale. He scored in double figures in seven games, including his debut outing against Western Carolina when he scored 11 points.

He shot 45 per cent from the field (50-111) and was slightly better from three-point range, 45.3 per cent (34-75). He made 29-43 free throws, only 67.4 per cent.

Felix seems less surprised than many others that he ended up at Alabama. He said that when he was a child he was watching television and saw a program about the United States and a map of Alabama. "I thought then I would like someday to go to Alabama," he said.

As it turned out, he was an exchange student, going from Paris to Mobile. It was in Mobile he heard about

the opportunity to play at Central Park Christian in Birmingham. He also tried his hand at American football, briefly. Felix, who played soccer growing up, was familiar with football on television. He played sandlot ball and was "pretty good" as a wide receiver. "I could go up high and catch the ball and I could run," he said. "But I enjoy watching football, and maybe play a little in the yard."

He was his team's most valuable player in leading Central Park Christian to a 26-1 record in 2002. But, as he said, he still had a bit of a language barrier and was not successful on his ACT. So it was off to junior college to become academically eligible for college.

Felix enhanced his basketball as well as his academics at Bevill State. He was the 2004 Alabama Sports Writers Association Junior College Athlete of the Year. He was also the national junior college player of the week on January 24, 2004, after he had back-to-back games in which he scored a total of 77 points and had 32 rebounds. He scored 40 or more points six times at Bevill and 30 or more points nine times in his junior college career.

There is one downside to playing basketball in Alabama. "I have not been home since 2001," he said. His parents have never been to America, but plan to see Jean Felix in person sometime this winter, he said. "They miss me and I miss them," he said. "We keep in touch by phone and e-mail."

Gottfried said, "He's a great person. The other players really like him. He's serious about what he does, but he has a good personality."

Like every other player who has performed under Gottfried at Alabama, when Jean Felix completes his basketball eligibility he will also be ready for his cap and gown. "I will graduate in May," he said

Terin Humphrey

Olympic star re-charged for second college season

Many athletes have come to The University of Alabama via Athens, but it's usually Athens, Alabama, not Athens, Greece. Alabama sophomore gymnast Terin Humphrey, a native of Bates, Missouri, earned a pair of silver medals at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, before joining the Crimson Tide in January 2005 and becoming a part of one of the nation's perennial gymnastics powers.

Standing 5-1, Humphrey blew away the competition earning an individual national championship on the uneven bars with a 9.9375 winning score as a freshman, the same apparatus where she won the Olympic silver medal in individual competition. Humphrey aided Team USA to silver medal in Athens in the summer, and the Crimson Tide to a second-place national team finish in the Spring semester.

Humphrey joined the Tide on December 26 of last year after spending the fall on an Olympic tour. She spent most of the fall deciding whether she would tour professionally at lucrative events or take her tumbling to Tuscaloosa.

On that traveling tour the Olympic team ran the gamut of network morning shows and late night talk shows. "We got to meet so many different famous people and go on different shows like Letterman," Humphrey said. "It was a lot of fun." But she ultimately chose college gymnastics.

"I'm glad I chose college," Humphrey said. "We toured about 48 cities and it was all through the first semester of college. Right now I'm really sick of traveling."

The psychology and criminal justice major, accustomed to the more docile atmosphere of elite gymnastics, liked the change in college gymnastics' team-oriented atmosphere and energetic crowds.

"College gymnastics is totally team and you can cheer each other on when you're having trouble," she said. "Elite gymnastics was more individual. If you were having a bad day the coaches would just put you aside and not even worry about you. Here, if you're having a bad day you get help from the coaches and they will back off a little bit."

Moving from elite Olympic gymnastics to touring gymnastics to college gymnastics took a toll on Humphrey. The 20 hour per week limit on practice in college, mandated by the NCAA, was a new experience, too. "We only have a 10 minute warm-up when I'm used to an hour and a half warm-up," Humphrey said. "The schedules are so much different with school. It was a big change in that."



Terin Humphrey was a national champion on bars

Sick of traveling, and burnt out on gymnastics after the college season ended in late April, Humphrey got her first break from gymnastics for the first time she can remember.

"So many years," she said. "In elite gymnastics you compete year round. I don't even remember..."

Humphrey spent the summer away from gymnastics "doing nothing" she said, to recharge herself for another national championship run beginning in January. She went home to Missouri and to Washington D.C. to see her brother, an active duty Marine.

Humphrey's list of accomplishments fills up pages. Alabama gymnastics' first Olympian posted the highest balance beam score on the second day of the 2004 Olympic Trials. In 2003, she was a member of the U.S. World Championships Gold Medal Team in Anaheim, California. Humphrey was third in the vault, uneven bars and floor exercise at the 2004 Visa American Cup, led the United States to a silver medal

after taking second in the vault and sixth in the all-around at the 2003 Pacific Challenge.

And the list goes on for the 19-year-old star. She was even a member of the National Honor Society at her public high school, where she went half a day before beginning gymnastics training at Great American Gymnastics Express, competing for Al Fong and Armine Barutyan-Fong.

Humphrey keeps her silver medal in a case in Missouri built by her father. At halftime of the Alabama-Southern Miss Football Game, Humphrey was presented with her ring by head coach Sarah Patterson and Athletics Director Mal Moore. Like most people who attend The University, Humphrey became an instant fan of Alabama football.

"Training so much I didn't go to very many football games," she said. "I went every once in a while. Now it's like I have to watch it and cheer them on, too. Expanding what I do outside the gym is a big difference." ■

Gymnastics Preview

Blending old with new and continuing success

For any sport, especially in the collegiate arena, the bulk of fan interest during preseason lies with the rookies. The talk crackles with facts and legend, stats and conjecture, wishful thinking and blind pessimism.

And for the Alabama gymnastics team, the 2005-06 edition, "rookie rumblings" could take quite a bit of time. Nearly half of the tumblers on the Tide's roster of 15 are rookies and all of them are hungry to make an immediate contribution to the Tide's fortunes.

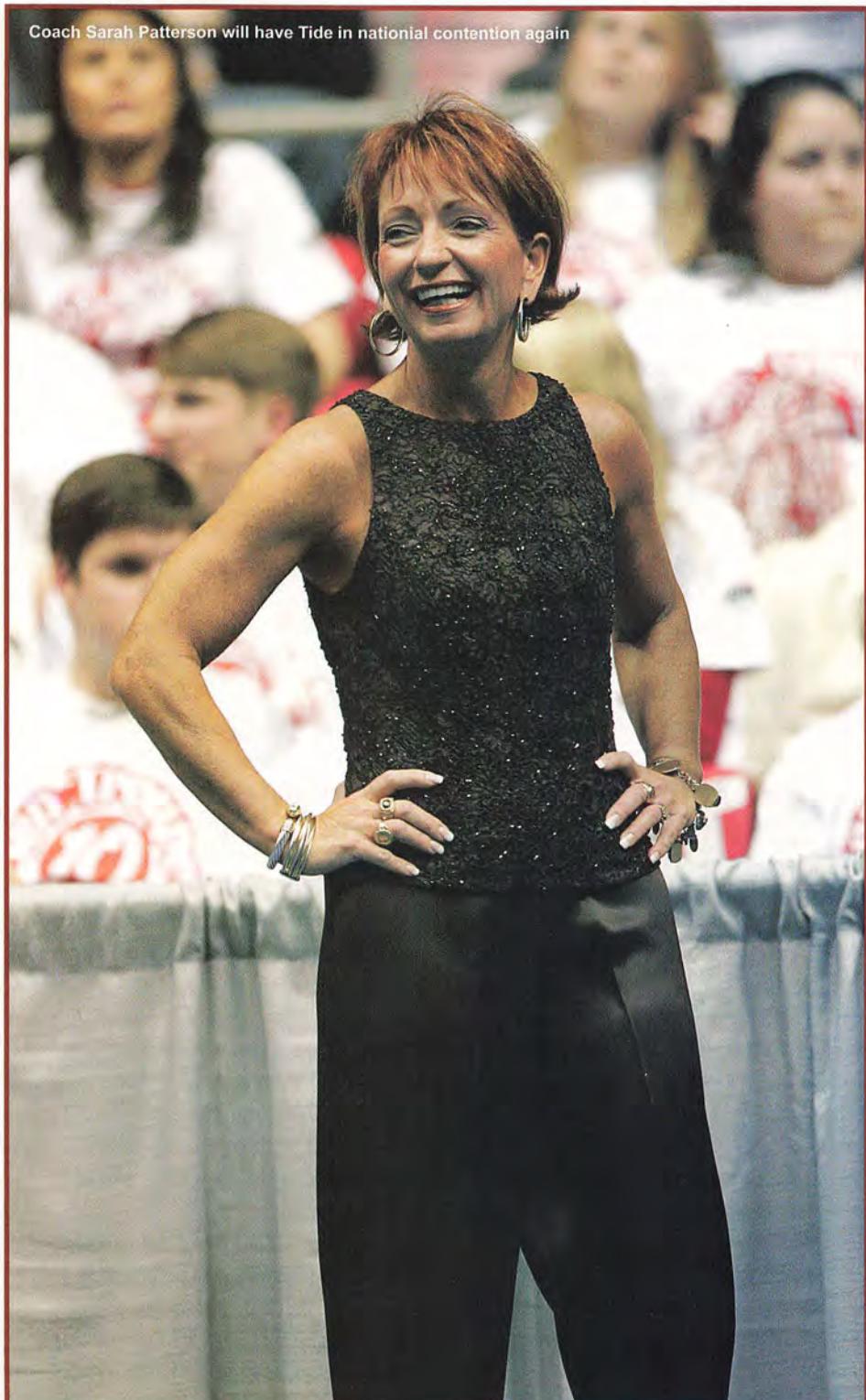
This season marks the third time Alabama has fielded a seven-member freshman class. The first time came in 1980, Sarah and David Patterson's first recruiting class made it to campus totaling the lucky number. As seniors, that class would take Alabama to its first NCAA Championships, where they surprised everyone, except maybe themselves, by finishing fourth.

And this year's senior class started out as seven strangers who came together in Tuscaloosa on the heels of the 2002 NCAA Championship. That group has enjoyed its fair share of success as well, helping the Tide to a pair of NCAA runner-up finishes, sandwiching a third place finish in 2004. Individually three of them have earned All-America honors and uber-senior Ashley Miles has dominated the postseason like very few before her, with three NCAA titles and fistfuls of SEC and NCAA Regional crowns to go with them.

And while a class this size will always mean a lot of work for the coaching staff, in terms of settling them in and getting them acclimated to collegiate life, the rookies of 2006 have made things fairly easy for the Pattersons, in their 28th year coaching the Tide. (It is a veteran staff as Assistant Coach Bryan Raschilla is in his 10th year, and Volunteer Coach Dana Dobransky Duckworth is in her seventh year.)

"The freshmen are highly motivated,"

Coach Sarah Patterson will have Tide in national contention again



Sarah Patterson said. "Not only in the gym, but in the classroom. They are very focused on doing well in both areas and I think that has gone a long way to making their transition relatively smooth."

Blending seven personalities together can be tricky, but the coaching staff has been pleased with how this diverse group has come together.

"There are definitely a variety of personalities, but they have bonded together very quickly," David Patterson said. "They have a common goal to contribute to our success and are dedicated to making that happen. That certainly helps them come together."

This year's class of seven is headlined by Canadian Olympian Melanie Banville. The Long Sault, Ontario, native is the Tide's second Olympian, coming hard on the heels of 2005 rookie Terin Humphrey. She is also the Tide's second international gymnast, following in the footsteps of All-America Natalie Barrington, a member of the Tide's 2002 NCAA Championships squad. Banville, who won the all-around at the Canadian Olympic trials, was a finalist at the Athens Olympiad. She won the all-around at last summer's Canadian Nationals and was a member of Canada's 2003 World Championship and Pan-American Games teams.

Cassie Martin comes to the Tide after winning the 2004 U.S. Level 10 National All-Around title. She is a legacy to Alabama, hailing from the same gym that produced All-America Raegan Tomasek and 2004 NCAA All-Around Champion Jeana Rice. An honor student, the Olney, Maryland, native was a member of the U.S. Level 10 National team. Another honor student, Courtney Priess is a two-time national finalist in the all-around. The Hamilton, Ohio, native was a six-year qualifier to the U.S. Level 10 championships. She racked up three top-10 all-around finalists at the national championships, including a runner-up finish.

Bianca Puello is another U.S. Level 10 all-around finalist. Another strong student, the Marion, Illinois, native was the 2001 national uneven bars champion and has competed

as an international elite as well. Ashley O'Neal finished seventh in the all-around at the national championships in 2005. The Kennesaw, Georgia, native also won the all-around vault, balance beam and floor exercise at the 2005 Region 8 Championships.

Amanda Montgomery was a member of the 2003 U.S. Junior Olympic National Team. The Jacksonville, Florida, native was also a member of the national honor society and the 2005 Florida balance beam champion. And for Ashley Ford, the trip to The University was a short one. She grew up just over the bridge in Northport and competed for the Bama Bounders, which trains in Coleman Coliseum. She is the Level 10 state all-around, vault, uneven bars and floor exercise champion in 2005.

So there is some definite firepower in the freshman class. Patterson and company have to find the best way to blend them with the veterans with an eye on doing better than last year, which will be no easy task. There is not much room for improvement. The Crimson Tide posted its fourth consecutive top-three finish, coming away with a NCAA runner-up finish in 2005. It marks the 10th top-two NCAA finish and 20th among the nation's final four.

Alabama also captured its 20th NCAA Regional title in the past 24 years and had a field day individually. Miles won three Southeastern Conference individual titles, including her third consecutive floor exercise title. She also won her third consecutive regional vault and floor exercise titles. And then came the NCAA Championships where the always exciting Miles was absolutely explosive. She earned four All-America honors at the championships and became the first gymnast in NCAA history to score two 10.0s during the Super Six Team Finals. Miles added all that to a career that already included three NCAA titles and five All-America honors.

For Terin Humphrey, a freshman year that started with a pair of Olympic Silver Medals finished off with a trio of collegiate gold. Humphrey, who joined the Tide in January after spending the fall on the T.J.

Maxx Olympic Tour, won the SEC, NCAA Regional and finally the NCAA Uneven Bars titles, giving the Tide their 18th individual NCAA Championship. She also earned four All-America honors to start off her career. Dana Filletti enjoyed a breakout year, competing in the all-around and using a career high on the uneven bars to grab her first All-America nod.

So how do you improve on near perfection? It started in the preseason. As many a coach has said, championships aren't won in preseason, but they can be lost.

One of the tasks at hand, and one that will fall on the entire team, not just the freshmen, is replacing the Tide's three All-America seniors from a year ago. Alexis Brion, Shannon Hrozek and Michelle Reeser have left big shoes to fill not only in terms of talent, but experience as well.

Miles, Filletti, All-America Mari Bayer, Rachael Delahoussaye and Dana Pierce make up the senior class. Miles, Filletti and Dana Pierce each saw all-around action last season while Bayer was a rock on three events and Delahoussaye was the Tide's leadoff on the balance beam.

Erin Rightley is the Tide's lone junior. Last season she saw action on three events and was a mainstay of the Tide's floor exercise lineup. Kaitlin White joins Humphrey in the sophomore class. White enjoyed a break out performance at last year's NCAA Championships, one that will hopefully carry over into this season.

So with the team split nearly half and half between returners and newcomers, fans can expect a new look Tide to hit the floor come January when the competitive season starts, but no matter the makeup, Alabama's aim remains that same.

"Every team is different," Sarah Patterson said. "And that's especially true this year with seven freshmen. But what doesn't change is our ultimate goal, which is to be on the floor on the last night, which a chance to win a national title. The path to a championship always changes, but I think one of the reasons for our success over the past 25 years is that our focus on the prize never wavers." ■

Swimming & Diving Preview

National champion swimmer leads 2006 Tide

If you're looking for a model of consistency and success, look no farther than Alabama swimming and diving. Year-in and year-out the Crimson Tide is a fixture among the nation's elite, having posted over 50 top-25 finishes, including 20 in the top 10.

Head Coach Eric McIlquham, heading into his third year at the Tide helm, has certainly done his part to keep that legacy alive. Last season the men finished 14th nationally while the women took 21st. And for the fourth year in a row, Alabama saw one of its own stand atop the awards stand at the NCAA Championships, a Crimson Tide streak McIlquham would love to keep rolling.

To that end, McIlquham combines with Assistant Head Coach Sonya Porter, Diving Coach Pat Greenwell and Assistant Coaches Nichole Ellis and Craig Nisgor to form one of the nation's top staffs. McIlquham, Porter and Ellis all came to the Tide with Division I head coaching experience. Greenwell has been named SEC Diving Coach of the Year five times and was the 2004 NCAA Championships Diving Coach of the Meet.

McIlquham and company have brought in large rookie classes for both the men and the women in an effort to add depth to the Tide's frontline talent. Of the 26 men on the Tide's roster, 10 are rookies, while a third of the Tide's 21 women come from the freshmen class.

"When I look at our rosters, there's some definite talent there and we've added some solid youngsters to both teams," McIlquham said. "This is a hungry team

and I think that while we were happy with last year's results, we're a long way from being satisfied."

For Alabama's men, it starts with returning NCAA Champion Vlad Polyakov. The junior had an amazing year in which he finaled in both the 100 and 200 breaststroke at the Athens Olympics, earned bronze medals in both events at the World Championships during the fall, and broke the SEC 200 breaststroke record on the way to winning both the 100 and 200. He capped all that off with shattering his own school record at the NCAA Championships on his way to winning the Tide's 18th individual national championship and fourth in as many years.

In addition to Polyakov, the men also return five All-Americans, seniors Aaron Ashworth, Spiros Bitsakis and Darren Erasmus, and juniors Hunor Maté and Apostolis Tsagkarakis.

Erasmus, Bitsakis, Tsagkarakis and sophomore Mike Jones make up the core of a potent sprint group. The Crimson Tide broke four of the five school relay marks last season and that group was a big part of that effort. Maté and Polyakov gave Alabama the best breaststroking duo in the nation last year.

In Erasmus and Tsagkarakis, Alabama has its best spring duo since Alex Voris and David Strassburg in the mid-1990s. Erasmus ranks second all-time for the Tide in the 100 freestyle behind two-time U.S. Olympian Jon Olsen. He is also third in the 50 freestyle. Tsagkarakis, who swam for his native Greece at the 2004 Olympics,

is second all-time for the Tide in the 50 freestyle, just a tenth of a second behind Olsen's school record. He is also third all-time in the 100 freestyle. With another year under his belt, Jones has the potential to make an even bigger impact on the Tide's fortunes this year.

The diving tradition at Alabama is as strong as anywhere in the country and one of Greenwell's strengths as a coach is his ability to get more from his athletes each year of their career. Ashworth was part of a potent one-two diving punch the Tide enjoyed last season along with Stewart Smith. With Smith lost to graduation, Ashworth will take on more of the scoring load, along with junior Alan Harris and sophomore Chad Fritch.

Also returning for the Tide will be seniors Waleed Al-Qahtani and Guido Arroyo, juniors Igor Erhardt and Tim Hansen along with sophomores Will Burke, Ryan Latone and Andy Neff. Each will be looking to step up for the Tide in their respective events.

Mark Randall headlines the Tide's rookie class. Randall represented his native South Africa at this summer's World Championships in Montreal. He will give the Tide a boost in the distance lane. Alabama will also be looking to the rest of the rookie class, Van Diehl, Luke Dickson, Hamp Eichold, Kevin Greer, Curtis Kelly, Alin Mihalca, Chris Perry, Andy Schnack and Austin Shirey, to make some noise early and often.

On the women's side, Alabama lost one of the most decorated swimmers in its



Kathryn Hallquist is All-America in the back stroke



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www.outdooralabama.com

storied history to graduation. Anne Poleska posted top-three NCAA finishes in the 200 breaststroke each of her four years, as well as earning a bronze medal in that event at the 2004 Olympics. She also holds the SEC record in the 200 and won six SEC titles in the breaststroke events during her Tide tenure.

And while the Tide will certainly miss Poleska, the well is far from dry. The women return four All-Americans, including seniors Kathryn Hallquist, Alison Lafevers and Crystal Rasmussen and junior Victoria Genova.

Hallquist, in addition to being a valuable relay leg, is knocking on the door of the school 100 backstroke record. She is less than half a second off the 1994 mark set by Tide legend Stacy Potter. While she's second in the 100, she is also fifth all-time for the Tide in the 200 backstroke.

Genova already owns the school record holder in the 200 butterfly and is the only woman in Alabama history to touch the wall in under two minutes in that event. She ranks seventh all-time for the Tide in the 100 butterfly.

Rasmussen has scored at the NCAA Championships in the diving events each of her first three years and is looking to have her best year as a senior. She will be joined on the boards by junior Karissa Tuthill.

Distance ace Hannah Miluska made an immediate impact on the Tide's fortunes last season as a rookie, jumping into Alabama's all-time top-10 in the 1000 and 1650 freestyle. She did all that after joining Alabama for the Spring semester. The Tide also returns juniors Melina Bassino, Selma Beji, Bridgett Belyea, Amanda Gilbert and Tara Theilemann along with sophomores Kim Singer and Erin Sparks.

Alabama added seven freshmen on the women's side and all of them will have the opportunity to contribute immediately. The rookies include Caitlin Anderson, Agustina de Giovanni, Caroline Humpherville, Aimee Kliewer, Amanda Maher, Mary-Kate Sellers and Vanessa Von der Heyde.

Football Recruiting

Tide watching out-of-state skill position players

For many, many years, Alabama has been the dominant football team in the South and among the most dominant in the nation. And despite the state of Alabama being a relatively small population state, Crimson Tide success has come in great part because of the excellent football players developed by the high school coaches in Alabama.

Nevertheless, while it is great to have a Brodie Croyle (Rainbow City), it didn't hurt to have Joe Namath (Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania). Ozzie Newsome (Leighton) was great, but Don Hutson (Pine Bluff, Arkansas) may have been the greatest ever. John Hannah (Albertville) was the best ever at his position, but Dwight Stephenson (Virginia) may have been at his. The Tide won with Johnny Musso (Birmingham) and Shaun Alexander (Florence, Kentucky), Lee Roy Jordan (Excel) and Barry Krauss (Pompano Beach, Florida).

As one of the nation's most prominent football schools, Alabama recruiters have the luxury of being able to go into homes coast to coast and have the attention of the top football players. And while Alabama has signed players from great distances, Crimson Tide out-of-state recruiting is concentrated in the Southeast.

Here is a look at some of the top out-of-state skill positions players—backs and wide receivers—who have been linked with Bama.



QUARTERBACK

All eyes are on Tim Tebow (6-3, 225) from Nease High School in St. Augustine, Florida. Scout.com's third best quarterback in the country is a top priority for the Alabama coaching staff. Tebow has visited the Alabama campus, attended games, and scheduled an official visit. The leading competition is Florida. Tebow grew up a Gators fan and his parents are Florida graduates. As a junior the five-star quarterback threw for over 4,000 yards and rushed for over 1,200. He accounted for 70 touchdowns. He has had a sensational senior season despite losing games to Hoover and St. Augustine. Teammate Charlie Kirschman has committed to Alabama and will try to persuade his quarterback to join him at The Capstone. It is

a tough task to haul in the Florida-native dual-threat quarterback, but the Crimson Tide has pulled even for his signature.

RUNNING BACK

Chris Brown (5-10, 195) from Alexandria, Louisiana, rushed for over 1,900 yards as a junior and has had a great senior year. The four-star back has narrowed his choices to Alabama, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Mississippi State and TCU are also under consideration. Friends and family members are strongly encouraging him to pack his bags and head to Tuscaloosa. Brown could easily be a part of the class of 2006 after his official visit to The Capstone.

LeSean McCoy, from Bishop McDevit High School in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and C.J. Spiller from Union County High School in Lake Butler, Florida, are two of the top running backs in the country.

McCoy (5-11, 200) has listed Alabama among his long list of favorites since the spring. McCoy was primed for a huge senior season, and he was exceeding everyone's expectations. His team was undefeated, and with under five minutes left in his third game of the season McCoy fractured his left ankle. McCoy's injury came days after being selected to play in the U.S. Army All-American game. Though he is considered a long shot for the Tide,



Anthony Dixon



Justin Woodall



Marcus Udell



Anthony Jones



Terry Grant

the nation's second ranked back by Scout.com is giving Alabama a look. The front-runners for his signature are Penn State, Virginia Tech and USC.

Scout.com's number four ranked back, C. J. Spiller (5-10, 185) has Alabama on his radar. He is one of the fastest players in the Sunshine State recording an incredible 4.35 at the Scout.com combine. The five-star back rushed for over 1,400 yards as a junior and is averaging over 11 yards per carry for his senior campaign. Spiller lists his favorites as the big three in Florida (Florida, Florida State, Miami), USC, Alabama Clemson and Tennessee.

The Alabama coaching staff will look to replace LéRon McClain and Tim Castille eventually and Terry (Mississippi) High School's Anthony Dixon may be the solution. Dixon (6-1, 230) is a big running back who possesses a lot of speed. Scout.com's three-star back has the power and size to be an excellent performer in the SEC. Alabama faces the in-state schools of Ole Miss and Mississippi State for his signature. Dixon visited Tuscaloosa this season and is planning an official visit for the second weekend of January.

Terry Grant from Lumberton (Mississippi) High School is considered the fastest prospect in the state. As a junior Grant rushed for 2,615 yards and 31 touchdowns. Scout.com's three-star running back has had a great senior season. Grant has received

scholarship offers from Alabama, Auburn, Florida State, Mississippi State, Ole Miss and Southern Miss. The 5-9, 180 pound back is not listing any favorites, but early candidates for official visits are Alabama, Auburn, Florida State and Southern Miss.

WIDE RECEIVER

Jarred Fayson is a Scout.com five-star receiver on the recruiting board. On a national level, Fayson ranks two spots ahead of Tim Hawthorne from Homewood. Fayson is 6-0, 190 pounds, and he runs a legitimate 4.4 40-yard dash. From Hillsborough High School in Tampa, Florida, Fayson has the Crimson Tide in his top five list of favorite schools. Fayson paid close attention to the play of Tyrone Prothro, and he likes the way the Alabama coaching staff used the superstar. Another tough task to pull the highly touted athlete from the Sunshine State, but with Tim Tebow's strong friendship the two might decide Tuscaloosa is the place to play for national championships. Fayson said, "Tim was blown away. He was excited that I was as interested in Alabama as he is."

Receiver Anthony Jones from Seguin High School in Arlington, Texas, has Alabama among his top two schools. Jones transferred before his senior season originating from Rickards High School in Tallahassee. Scout.com's three-star receiver was averaging about 100 yards receiving

per game as a senior. Jones (6-0, 170) has received over 19 scholarship offers, and the Crimson Tide was one of the first schools to extend an offer.

Carlton Salters, a Scout.com three-star wide receiver from North Florida Christian School in Tallahassee, Florida, received a scholarship offer from Alabama in October, but he knew a lot about the Crimson Tide before that. He said he had been recruited by Auburn for quite a while before Coach Bob Connelly got the Bama offer to him. He has offers from Alabama, Auburn, Arkansas, Louisville, Maryland, and Wake Forest.

"Alabama is definitely in the mix now," he said. "I know they have a lot of tradition. Coach Bear Bryant is a legend. They are coming off of probation. Coach Shula has them heading in the right direction."

The 6-1, 185-pound receiver is scheduling official visits and said, "I know I will visit Maryland and Louisville. I am going to try and take all of my official visits to places that are not close to me. If a school is within driving distance, then I will probably take a few unofficial visits to that school."

DEFENSIVE BACK

Justin Woodall is one of the top safety prospects on the recruiting board. Woodall set a state record as a junior when he recorded 16 interceptions for Lafayette High School



Jarred Fayson



Corderick Govan

in Oxford, Mississippi. Woodall had a sensational senior season playing quarterback and safety. Scout.com's three-star prospect lists his top three as Alabama, Mississippi State and Ole Miss. All three schools have extended scholarship offers to the 6-1, 200 pound athlete. Woodall plans to make a decision by the end of his senior season.

Corderick Govan, from Charleston High School, is a talented defensive back from the Magnolia State. Govan 6-1, 190, has received several scholarship offers, and he lists his top schools as Alabama, Ole Miss, Mississippi State and Memphis. Scout.com's three-star prospect is putting up big numbers as a senior and averaged over 10 tackles per game. As a junior, Govan was named all-state after recording 107 tackles and five sacks.

Marcus Udell, from Godby High School in Tallahassee, Florida, is one of the top cornerbacks in the Southeast. Udell is a fast, physical defensive back (5-11, 180) who likes to match up against the bigger receivers. Ranked as the 35th best defensive back in the country by Scout.com, Udell has strong interest in the Crimson Tide. Alabama signed running back Roy Upchurch from Godby in 2005, and Upchurch will help the Tide coaching staff recruit his former teammate. Udell is wide open among his favorites, and a decision likely to come close to signing day. ■

FOR CHRISTMAS!

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CRIMSON TIDE

GENE STALLINGS AND ALABAMA'S GREATEST PLAYERS

Alabama football means championships and All-Americans and, for many, memories of a man in a houndstooth hat. Some 62 former Alabama players who performed in Crimson and White over a 75-year period tell us **WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CRIMSON TIDE**, and many remember Paul "Bear" Bryant. His time as a Bama player, assistant coach, and 25 years as head coach is a major part of Alabama football, but not the only great era. There have also been national championships won under Wallace Wade and Frank Thomas

and Gene Stallings. And part of **WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CRIMSON TIDE** is former Alabama players' expectations of more national titles.

The last coach to lead Alabama to the national championship is Gene Stallings, who played and coached for Coach Bryant before becoming a Hall of Fame caliber coach himself.

Not only have the coaches been legendary but that stellar tradition has spawned players enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame and the NFL's Pro Football Hall of Fame. Now, Gene Stallings and 'BAMA Editor Kirk McNair have col-

laborated to bring together many of the greatest players ever to wear the Crimson and White to share their memories in **WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CRIMSON TIDE-GENE STALLINGS AND ALABAMA'S GREATEST PLAYERS**.

Among those sharing their memories are: from the '40s and '50s, Harry Gilmer and Bart Starr; from the '60s and '70s, Lee Roy Jordan, Joe Namath, Ray Perkins, Ken Stabler, Johnny Musso, John Hannah, and Ozzie Newsome; from the '80s and '90s, Mike Shula and Jay Barker. And many more, including those from the new millennium.

Gene Stallings reveals much of his philosophy and also tells the story of how he did *not* become Alabama's head football coach in 1983. Kirk McNair introduces the players.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CRIMSON TIDE-GENE STALLINGS AND ALABAMA'S GREATEST PLAYERS is more than 300 pages in an oversized format with archival photographs throughout. To order your copy (\$27.95 plus tax, shipping and handling) call 1-205-345-5074. You may request a personalized autograph from Kirk McNair.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CRIMSON TIDE



GENE STALLINGS

AND ALABAMA'S GREATEST PLAYERS

KIRK McNAIR

Hot List

Ten Most Wanted

Here are 10 players Alabama would like to add to the list of those already committed to sign with the Crimson Tide as determined by 'BAMA Recruiting

By Andrew Bone

1. André Smith

**6-4, 320, 5.1, Offensive Lineman,
Birmingham Huffman**

André Smith is Scout.com's top offensive lineman in the country. Smith is not naming favorites, and his top 12 schools include Alabama, Auburn, Arkansas, Florida, Florida State, Georgia, LSU, Miami, Oklahoma, Tennessee, USC and Vanderbilt.

He was named the MVP of the U.S. Army All-American Combine in January 2005 and has been selected to play in the nationally televised game January 7, 2006, in San Antonio, Texas.

Smith knows he will set an official visit with Miami. Florida State and Alabama are likely candidates for an official visit as well.

2. Tim Tebow

**6-3, 225, 4.6, Quarterback, St. Augustine
(Florida) Nease**

Scout.com ranks Tim Tebow as the nation's third best quarterback. This looks to be a two-team race between the Tide and Gators for the dual-threat quarterback, who may enter college in the spring semester. Tebow was in Tuscaloosa for an unofficial visit for the Alabama-Florida game and said, "It was an exciting game. The fans were awesome."

Tebow's teammate, Tide commit Charlie Kirschman, will try to persuade him to The Capstone, and former Nease teammate and go-to-guy, Will Oakley, is a redshirt freshman Tide receiver. Tebow made the Alabama Tennessee game an official visit, where Oakley was his player host.

3. Tim Hawthorne

**6-2, 205, 4.5, Wide Receiver,
Homewood**

The Alabama coaching staff wants to add a big-play receiver and Tim Hawthorne is the top candidate. The four-star receiver set the season and career receiving records at Homewood as a junior. Hawthorne's junior numbers were 84 catches for 1,360 yards with 14 touchdowns. He did not have big numbers as a senior due to big wins over the competition. Hawthorne holds over 20 offers including Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Georgia, LSU, Tennessee and Louisville. He has remained very firm about not naming favorites, but after an unofficial visit in Tuscaloosa for the Alabama-Florida game he said, "They've (Alabama) been at the top of my list for a while."

4. Deontwan Whitehead

**6-6, 245, 4.7, Defensive Lineman,
Birmingham West End**

Deontwan Whitehead is the best defensive lineman on Alabama's recruiting board. The Tide staff landed a great group of linemen in 2005, and Whitehead would be a huge pick-up for Alabama. Scout.com's five-star stud was in Tuscaloosa for the Alabama-Florida game and said, "I was shocked. There are no words to describe how great the defense played. They just have great coaching. The atmosphere was off-the-chain." Whitehead has a broad list of favorite schools, and the Tide is in the mix for his signature. He first two official visits were to Louisville and Arkansas. He plans to announce his decision on signing day.

5. Earl Alexander

**6-5, 210, 4.5 Athlete, Phenix City
Central**

Earl Alexander is the top athlete on Alabama's recruiting board. His stock soared after an outstanding performance at the Scout.com combine in May. The four-star athlete plays behind center in high school, but a position change on the next level is possible. Alexander grew up an Alabama fan and along with a number of recruits across the South, he likes the way the Tide has turned.

6. A.J. Jones

**6-2, 190, 4.5, Linebacker, Tampa
(Florida) Middleton**

The Alabama coaching staff has a foot in the door with some of the nation's best linebackers, including A.J. Jones. He is one of the best outside linebacker prospects in the country and rated a four-star recruit by Scout.com. Jones was injured in his game (minor knee injury) on Friday night prior to his scheduled official visit to Alabama October 1. Jones did watch the game from Tampa and said, "It was shocking." He will take an official visit to Bama. This looks to be another two-team race between Alabama and Florida.

7. Toryan Smith

**6-0, 240, 4.6, Linebacker, Rome,
Georgia**

Toryan Smith is a top middle linebacker. Coach Joe Kines would like to sign with the Tide in 2006. Smith attended the Alabama-Florida game and said, "Oh man,

it was awesome. The atmosphere, it was one of the loudest places I've been. It was serious over there." He is expected to decide between the two biggest names in college football, Notre Dame and Alabama.

8. Jermarcus Ricks

**6-4, 285, 5.3, Offensive Lineman,
Colbert County of Leighton**

Four-star lineman Jermarcus Ricks is one of the top linemen in the Southeast. He holds a slew of offers including Alabama, Auburn, Georgia, LSU, Tennessee, Florida State and Oklahoma. "Alabama and Auburn are still my top two schools," Ricks has said consistently. Despite having family in Auburn with brother Courtney Harden a redshirt freshman linebacker, Ricks claims it will not play a big factor in his decision. Ricks will take all five official visits before making a decision.

9. Anthony Dixon

**6-1, 230, 4.6, Fullback, Terry,
Mississippi**

The Alabama coaching staff wants to add a back to the class of 2006. Anthony Dixon has been impressed with the Tide's performance and said, "I liked their whole team. They play together." Dixon has over 1,000 yards rushing for his senior season and 11 touchdowns. He plans an official visit with the Tide the second weekend in January. The Mississippi schools are pushing hard for his signature.

10. Michael Goggans

**6-3, 245, 4.6, Tight End-Defensive End,
Benjamin Russell, Alexander City**

Michael Goggans has given a verbal commitment to Tennessee, but plans to set an official visit with Alabama. Goggans is a utility player and could line up at tight end or defensive end. Coach Dave Ungerer is relentless in recruiting the Volunteer commit and Goggans has built a good relationship with his Alabama recruiting coach. "They still want me even though I committed to Tennessee. Coach Ungerer is a good guy. He tells me everything straight up. He tells me where they would like to use me. They like me at either tight end or defensive end." With Tide verbal commitment of teammate, LaBronski Hutchins, the recruiting wars will not end until signing day for the duo from Benjamin Russell. ■

By Kirk McNair

Row Tide!

Alabama announces addition of women's rowing to sports line-up

Frank Howard was an outstanding football player at Alabama, but better known as the head football coach at Clemson, where the "Bard of Barlow Bend" was very successful. He also served as Clemson's athletics director. And he once had a decision to make about adding a sport.

The late, great sportswriter and humorist, Lewis Grizzard, once described Clemson as nothing but "Auburn with a lake." And there is a nice lake at Clemson, one of the reasons a club crew team was begun.

The crew team went to Howard to see if crew could not be made an intercollegiate sport so that the athletics department would pay for the skulls and oars and travel expenses to competitions, not to mention athletics scholarships for the team members.

Howard said, "It will be a cold day in hell when we here at Clemson University pay for people to sit on their ass and go backwards."

But, of course, Howard didn't have to contend with Title IX issues, which mandate schools take the money from football and basketball that have a big fan base and earn revenue and use it to fund women's sports. Alabama Athletics Director (and all others) do have to concern themselves with gender equity.

And so, in mid-October on the bank of the Black Warrior River that flows through Tuscaloosa just below campus, Moore announced that The University of Alabama is adding rowing as its 21st varsity sport.

Moore was joined by University and community leaders when he announced the new Crimson Tide sport. In addition to the expected athletics department personnel, President Robert E. Witt, Mayor Walt Maddox, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Johnny Aycock and others were on hand.

The addition of rowing may mean more than just another minor sport.

The primary reason for adding a sport is to help meet gender equity considerations of

Title IX, which require athletics opportunities for women. Football and men's basketball are the cash cows of the athletics department, paying for 18 (soon to be 19) sports that do not carry their own weight.

Alabama intends to spend \$300,000 on the sport before competition begins in the spring of 2007.

One thing the Mal Moore era of athletics will be long-remembered for is facilities. Moore was the first to admit that there isn't much to be done in that area to start a women's rowing team. He said a coach from an Ivy League school had seen the Black Warrior River where it flows below campus and the River Walk Park that has been constructed there and pronounced it as good as any in the nation for crew. The river has high, tree-lined banks that limit wind problems and locks at each end of the Oliver impoundment, which is between the Holt lock and dam and the Oliver lock and dam.

"After thorough consideration, we are adding women's rowing to our slate of sports beginning with the 2006-07 season," Moore said. "The more we looked into it, the more it seemed a natural fit for Alabama. There is an active rowing community in the Tuscaloosa area, and the state as a whole, and we have a tremendous natural facility for this sport on the Black Warrior River and the recently completed River Road Park gives us an outstanding venue for watching events."

But Moore actually sees some infrastructure additions in conjunction with the new sport. "I can see a club house with workout equipment and storage, and perhaps with a restaurant on top," Moore said, pointing just upstream from River Road Park. He also challenged the mayor to provide a walkway across Jack Warner Parkway from The University to the park.

No fewer than two former Alabama football players are owners of popular chain restaurants—Bob Baumhower and Peter Kim.

There has been an active and vibrant rowing

club on campus since 1987 and there are club teams in Huntsville, Birmingham and Auburn.

"Women's varsity athletics at The University of Alabama provide great opportunities for student-athletes to compete at the highest level of competition in 11 different sports," said UA President Witt. "Rowing has enjoyed great success as a club sport on campus and is a natural choice for our 12th women's varsity sport."

In the Southeastern Conference, Tennessee sponsors a varsity program while Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, LSU, Auburn and Vanderbilt all support club teams.

"And most importantly to us, rowing will provide the most opportunities for University of Alabama students to participate in one of the greatest traditions in collegiate athletics," Moore said.

A spring sport, collegiate rowing has enjoyed a tremendous growth spurt over the past decade. Since 1997, more than 30 teams have been added at the NCAA Division I level, which translates into almost 2,000 more student-athletes. The average Division I program fields between 50 and 70 student-athletes.

There are some 90 Division I women's rowing teams," Moore said, noting that the number is "quite a bit more than gymnastics. It's an opportunity for many women."

Eights (8+) and fours (4+) are the most common collegiate competitions and the two events held at the NCAA Championships. The plus indicates a coxswain on board.

Competitions range anywhere from a dual meet to multi-team invitationals.

Although a team has "only" 20 scholarships, they can be broken up and as many as 60 women could receive aid to participate. This is helpful in meeting gender equity goals.

The search for a coach to bring rowing to The Capstone begins immediately and will be conducted by Moore and Associate Athletics Director and Senior Woman Administrator Marie Robbins.

"We are looking for a coach who embodies our commitment to excellence in all facets of

collegiate athletics," Moore said. "The sports we have added most recently have gone on to enjoy tremendous success both on the field and the court as well as in the classroom and we are hoping to duplicate that success with rowing."

NCAA Division I schools are allowed 20 full scholarships for women's rowing. Rowing is an equivalency sport, meaning that scholarships may be divided in any manner among student-athletes so long as the total awards do not exceed the limit for the sport. Alabama will start with five full scholarships and will phase in scholarships over a span of years until it reaches the maximum.

The last three sports Alabama has added, volleyball, soccer and softball, have all won SEC Western Division titles. Soccer and softball have both advanced to NCAA competition with softball, in its 10th year, making three World Series appearances during that span.

Of the Tide's 21 sports, rowing is the 12th women's sport. Softball was added in 1996. Soccer was a varsity sport from 1982-89 and was reinstated for the 1994 season. Similarly volleyball first competed in 1974 before being disbanded in 1982. It returned to campus as a varsity sport in 1989. Women's basketball, golf, gymnastics, swimming and diving and tennis were all added during the 1974-75 school year. Women's indoor and outdoor track and field and cross country was started in 1977.

Football is the oldest of the Tide's nine varsity men's teams, starting in 1892. Swimming and diving is the youngest men's sport, joining the Tide ranks in the fall of 1959.

Rowing Terminology

Blade: the end of the oar which pulls the boat through the water.

Bow: the forward end of the boat which crosses the finish line first; the rower in the seat nearest the forward end of a shell, who typically has a quick catch, stable technique and a shorter arc.

Bucket Rigging: two riggers on the same side next to each other instead of alternated.

Coxswain (cox): person who steers the shell from a seat located in the stern or a lying position in the bow.

Ergs: short for ergometer; individualized rowing simulators that help strength and conditioning.

Lightweight: a crew on which each athlete weighs under a specific amount (130 pounds for women).

Novice: a rower in the first year of collegiate competition.

Regatta: the name of rowing events in which several crews compete.

Repechage: a second chance race for those crews which did not automatically advance to the finals of an event.

Rigger: the part which attaches an oar to the shell.

Run: the distance the shell moves during one stroke.

Sculling: type of rowing where each rower uses two oars.

Shell: boat used in the rowing races. It seats nine people for an Eight and five people for a Four, and ranges in length from 45 feet for a Four to 58 feet for an Eight.

Sprints: used in collegiate competition, this type of race features a course which is 2000 meters long, usually with four to six unmarked or buoyed lanes and a floating or staked start.

Stern: the back of the boat; the end the rowers face during competitions.

Stroke: a complete cycle of moving the shell through the water; the rower who sits closest to the stern, looks directly at the coxswain in a stern-coxed boat and sets the rhythm for the shell.

Sweeping: type of rowing where each rower uses one oar.

Varsity: the collegiate rower who competes beyond the novice level.

8+ and 4+: eights (8+) and fours (4+) are the most common collegiate competitions and the two events held at the NCAA Championships. The plus indicates a coxswain on board. ■

Future Tide row team will be on Black Warrior River



'BAMA SCORECARD

The debate over whether Tyrone Prothro should have been playing in the final nine minutes of Alabama's blowout victory over Florida was superceded by discussion of what-if anything-went wrong with Prothro's surgery. Prothro remained in DCH Medical Center for over two weeks after undergoing the surgery the night of the October 1 Florida game.

With Alabama leading 31-3 and facing a fourth-and-long, the Tide starters were still in the game. Quarterback Brodie Croyle lofted a long pass to Prothro, whose leg was fractured when he hit the end zone turf trying for the interception. It was a serious injury.

Later, relatives would say that Prothro thought he may have suffered an injury to the leg on the game's first punt. Prothro was hit and fumbled on that play, but more than made up for it a few minutes later when he caught an 87-yard touchdown pass that got the rout started.

Prothro had an infection associated with the injury he suffered when he was lost for the season with a broken leg and he remains in DCH Regional Medical Center. At the request of his family, Dr. Les Fowler, who performed the surgery, issued a statement updating Prothro's condition.

Dr. Fowler's statement said, "Tyrone Prothro suffered an open comminuted fracture of his left tibia and fibula during the Alabama-Florida game on Oct. 2, 2005. He underwent emergency surgery that night to stabilize the fracture.

"During the post-operative period, he developed an infection, secondary to bacterial contamination at the time of his injury. He did not develop a staph infection.

"Since that time, he has undergone aggressive treatment and antibiotic for the infection. To date, the attempts to eradicate the infection appear to have been successful."

Kent Johnston Leaving?

Staff stability has been a trademark of Mike Shula's tenure as Alabama's head football coach, but it is believed Shula will have to make at least one staff change at season's end.

Multiple sources told Mitch Dobbs of 'BAMA Magazine that current Strength and Conditioning Coach Kent Johnston plans to retire at the end of the football season. According to those sources,

Johnston told Shula in August that he plans to retire to Texas and will leave athletics to enter private business.

Shula has often credited Johnston for his return to Alabama's rigorous "lower gym" workouts in winter conditioning.

Shula is completing his third season in which his on-the-field coaching staff has remained entirely in tact.

Asked about the story, Shula said, "We don't have any announcement to make about that." Asked if he disputed the report, Shula repeated, "We don't have any announcement to make."

Johnston has strong ties in the state of Texas. He was born in Mexia, Texas, and graduated from Stephen F. Austin before getting his master's degree at Alabama. Johnston was a graduate assistant strength and conditioning coach at Alabama in the 1980s when Shula was a player at Alabama. He and Shula served together on Ray Perkins' Tampa Bay Bucs staff in the late 1980s.

Johnston had been a 14-year veteran of the NFL before coming to Alabama, working mostly with Green Bay Packers and Seahawks head coach Mike Holmgren.

Shula hired Johnston after the 2003 season from the Seattle Seahawks to replace Ben Pollard, who came in with Dennis Franchione but did not initially follow him to Texas A&M. It was Shula's only staff change.

Ryans The Athlete

Following Alabama's fast start in 2005, and particularly the Tide's thrashing of previously fifth-ranked Florida that propelled the Tide into the nation's top ten, all eyes were on quarterback Brodie Croyle. He even made the cover of Sports Illustrated. And at least one major newspaper mused on Croyle's chances of winning the Heisman Trophy.

Croyle is a dandy, but the Alabama player most likely to reap the most post-season awards this year is senior linebacker DeMeco Ryans. Ryans didn't make the cover of Sports Illustrated, but he was named a Midseason All-America by the magazine.

Ryans owns the Alabama single game tackle record with 25 (against Arkansas in 2003). He is one of only four Alabama players in history to be credited with 300 or more career tackles.

(Alabama did not begin keeping tackle statistics until the early 1970s, which explains the absence of the likes of Lee Roy Jordan on the list.)

His 126 tackles in 2003 ranks second on the school single-season chart. Ryans had five double-figure tackle games in 2003 and two in 2004 and had 19 tackles against Arkansas in 2005, a feat for which he won SEC "Defensive Player of the Week" honors.

He is on the 2005 Lott Trophy Watch List and the Lombardi and Butkus Award watch lists. He was a second-team All-SEC pick by the coaches in 2004 and was on virtually every preseason All-SEC team in 2005. Ryans was the Walter Camp Football Foundation National Defensive Player of the Week, and SEC Defensive Player of the Week after his 11-tackle performance in Bama's 6-3 win over Tennessee.

Tyrone Prothro would have been a sure bet for All-Southeastern Conference, at least. Other Tide players likely to receive honors include halfback Kenneth Darby and defensive end Mark Anderson.

Ryans The Scholar

Senior Alabama linebacker DeMeco Ryans has been nominated for the Draddy Trophy, presented by the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame. There are 184 semifinalists for the award. The nominees are also candidates for the NFF 2005 National Scholar-Athlete Awards. The presenting sponsor is HealthSouth.

Known in many circles as the "Academic Heisman," the Draddy Trophy continues to be one of college football's most sought after and competitive awards, recognizing an individual as the absolute best in the country for his combined academic success, football performance and exemplary community leadership.

"The Draddy epitomizes everything right about college football," said NFF President Steven J. Hatchell. "By recognizing this group, we highlight the countless hours and demands that each college football player must balance as they pursue their dreams of a higher education and their passion for football. The NFF has both the privilege and responsibility to pay tribute to this exceptional group of role models, who truly embody the term student-athlete."

Nominated by their schools, which are

limited to one nominee each, semi-finalists must be a senior or graduate student in their final year of eligibility, have a GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, have outstanding football ability as a first team player, and have demonstrated strong leadership and citizenship. Established to honor former NFF Chairman Vincent dePaul Draddy, a Manhattan College quarterback who founded the Izod and Lacoste brands, the award comes with a stunning 24-inch, 25-pound bronze trophy and a \$25,000 post-graduate scholarship.

Alabama nominee DeMeco Ryans is on track to be graduated in December with a degree in management in just seven semesters at Alabama. The senior linebacker from Bessemer is a 2005 Arthur Ashe, Jr. Sports Scholar and on the Lott Trophy watch list. He was the 2005 male recipient of the Bryant Award, symbolic as the athletics department's top student-athlete. He is a three-time Academic All-Southeastern Conference selection. He earned the Mal Moore Leadership Award following spring practice.

With a 3.5 average GPA and majors such as biomedical engineering, the group includes 106 players who have earned all-conference recognition on the field and 125 captains. The offensive line produced the most nominees with 45. Linebackers came in second with 30 candidates. Offense outscored the defense with 88 to 80 hopefuls. The 16 special teams aspirants complete the contingent. Nominees hail from all NCAA divisions and the NAIA: 63 from Division I-A; 44 from Division I-AA; 20 from Division II; 43 from Division III; and 14 from the NAIA.

The NFF Awards Committee, comprised of former coaches, Hall of Famers and college administrators, was to select and announce 15 finalists on October 27. The winner, also selected by the committee, will be announced at the 48th NFF Awards Dinner on December 6 at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City. Each finalist will also be recognized that night as part of the 2005 National Scholar-Athlete Class, receiving an \$18,000 post-graduate scholarship.

Basketball Recruiting

As the November 9 early signing date for winter and spring sports approached, Alabama Head Men's Basketball Coach Mark Gottfried had some good news. But there were also some stunning losses.

Two players, a point guard and a power forward, announced very early for Alabama. And then in the early fall Bama got a commitment from a shooting guard.

Point guard Mikhail Torrence, a 6-3, 185-pound point guard at Mary Montgomery High School in Semmes, announced for Bama late

last season. He averaged 18 points and eight assists as a junior.

Avery Jukes, a 6-8, 210-pound power forward from South Gwinnett High School in Snellville, Georgia, is also committed to Bama. He averaged 11 points and 11 rebounds on a star-studded team as a junior.

In early October, Alabama received a commitment from Justin Tubbs, a shooting guard at Hewitt-Trussville High School.

Tubbs, 6-2, 175, averaged 17 points per game as a junior, leading the Huskies to a 21-10 record. Tubbs also averaged 5.1 rebounds, 2.9 steals and 2.4 assists per game.

"He's always wanted to play at Alabama," said Hewitt-Trussville coach Bo Coln. "I think they're getting a great student-athlete. Justin has been tremendous for our program. He worked very hard in the summer. He's just a gym rat."

Coln said Tubbs, who is qualified academically for freshman eligibility, chose Alabama over South Carolina and Birmingham-Southern.

Alabama recruited Jodie Meeks for almost two years. The 6-4 guard from Norcross, Georgia, had been listed everywhere as expected to choose between Alabama and Florida. But the power of Kentucky basketball is enormous. A nine-day effort by Kentucky resulted in Meeks announcing for the Wildcats.

Even more of a surprise and disappointment was Stanley Robinson, a 6-8 forward from Birmingham Woodlawn, choosing Connecticut over Alabama.

"When he visited UConn he played against Rudy Gay and that was a guy equal in size and quickness and to understand that he could develop into that caliber or player is something he couldn't turn down," Robinson's uncle Jeremy Welton told Scout.com.

"Alabama had been recruiting Stanley for a while and they've always been an option," Welton said. "As far as UConn, everybody was talking about the class they're bringing in and with losing six guys off their roster it was an opportunity to go to a top three-four basketball school in the country. He couldn't turn it down."

Turning down Alabama had to be tough and that's always the hardest call when you tell the in-state school you're headed elsewhere. The uncle said, "I'm sure he could tell you it was very difficult but in the end you have to make the best decision for yourself. In his mind he believes that UConn is the best place for him."

Exhibition Game For Relief

Mark Gottfried was to return to his hometown of Mobile with his Alabama basketball team to join three Mobile-based colleges in the "Coaches

vs. Katrina Benefit Basketball Exhibition Double Header" on November 9. Alabama was to play an exhibition game against Spring Hill College. The event's host, the University of South Alabama, was to play the University of Mobile at the USA Mitchell Center. All proceeds were to be donated to the South Alabama and South Mississippi chapters of the Salvation Army to benefit victims of Hurricane Katrina.

"I'm real excited about participating," said Gottfried who worked with his father, USA Director of Athletics Joe Gottfried, on the idea. "This is one small way to help the relief efforts in relation to Hurricane Katrina. I think we have an opportunity as a basketball program to do something special for other people. We hope to raise \$150,000 in one night. I have personally met with the mayor of Mobile and communicated with other mayors along the Gulf Coast, so I'm confident that the money will go where it needs to go."

In addition to bringing his team to play, Mark Gottfried said he and his wife, Elizabeth, who own a home on Orange Beach that was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan last fall, would donate to the cause.

"Elizabeth and I are going to pledge, personally, one dollar for every fan in attendance," said Gottfried. "I'm hoping to write a check for \$10,000 that night. We are encouraging others to either match that gift or just give whatever they can. Maybe it's fifty cents or a quarter for everybody in attendance. Hopefully that can be something that will motivate others to do the same thing."

In addition to playing in the game, Gottfried wants his players to fully comprehend the importance of participating in this benefit.

"We're going to take our players down and let them see first hand on the coast some of the devastation. I think that's important for our players to see it, to understand what happened, and, hopefully it gets our players in a mind frame that they need to give back and do things with the position that they're in. I think it's an awesome opportunity, and, hopefully the people along the Gulf Coast will come out that night and support this."

The Spring Hill game is the only exhibition game the Tide will play this season.

Tide Women On TV

The Alabama women's basketball team added another game to its television schedule for the 2005-06 campaign. The Tide's home match-up with perennial power Tennessee on February 19 will be televised by Comcast/Charter Sports Southeast (CSS). The contest, originally slated for a 2 p.m. CST tip-off, will begin at noon.

The Tide has at least two televised games

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this season. The Alabama-Ole Miss game in Tuscaloosa on February 9 will be shown on Fox Sports Net South.

Excellent Outing

The Jerry Pate National Intercollegiate was established over 20 years ago to bring some of the nation's top college golfers and highly-ranked teams to Alabama. The tournament, hosted by

The University of Alabama, has been played at Shoal Creek and at Old Overton in Birmingham.

Alabama was not among the highest ranked teams in this year's field, but the Crimson Tide performed well, finishing fourth at eight-under-par. Gator Todd, whose father, former Alabama and NFL quarterback Richard Todd was among his gallery Monday and Tuesday, finished tied for fourth at six under par for the 54-hole tournament.

Todd shot 67-72-68/207. Joseph Sykora finished tied for 14th (68-73-71/212) at one under par, Matthew Swan tied for 22nd (71-73-69/213) at even par, Mark Harrell tied for 27th (71-72-71/214) at one over par, and Dwight Rogers finished tied for 50th (75-71-75/221) for the Crimson Tide.

UAB's Garrett Osborn, playing on his home course, finished 16-under par, tying a course and tournament record along the way to be medalist, and second-ranked Georgia Tech bested a field of nine top-25 ranked teams to win the team championship.

Georgia Tech finished 24 under par to win the team championship, posting round scores of 274-278-276/828 to finish six strokes ahead of top ranked and defending national champion Georgia (285-276-273/834) who finished at 18 under. UAB finished third at ten under (842), followed by Alabama (844), Brigham Young and Tulsa (847), Clemson (851), Auburn (853), Augusta State (857), Arizona (860), TCU (865) and Vanderbilt (869).

Quick Start

It didn't take long for head coach Mic Potter to make an impact on the Crimson Tide women's golf program. But after two rounds at the Tide's own Ann Rhoads Intercollegiate, it looked like a trophy would be a few weeks in coming. That was before his Crimson Tide team had put together one of the most improbable come-from-behind victories in team history. The miraculous effort helped the Tide erase a 12-shot deficit and win the team crown at the Ann Rhoads Intercollegiate in Potter's very first tournament as head man at The Capstone.

Potter, whose teams won 35 tournaments in 23 years at Furman, chalked up his 36th team title, and his first for the Tide, after his Alabama squad posted a 298 in final round action at the Ol' Colony Golf Complex in Tuscaloosa. The Tide finished with a 54-hole total of 900, enough to win the event by six strokes.

The championship marked the first time that Alabama had won as the host school of the Ann Rhoads Intercollegiate in three tries. It was also the first team championship for the Tide since February of 2004, when Alabama won the title at the Saguaro Cactus Classic.

Tennis Winner

Freshman Shelley Godwin claimed her first flight championship at the Roberta Alison Fall Classic, which is hosted by the Alabama women's tennis team. Godwin won easily in the finals, 6-1, 6-1, over South Alabama's Jelena Krivacevic. She cruised earlier in the day in the semifinals with a 6-3, 6-1 victory over Tapiwa Marobela of Florida State.

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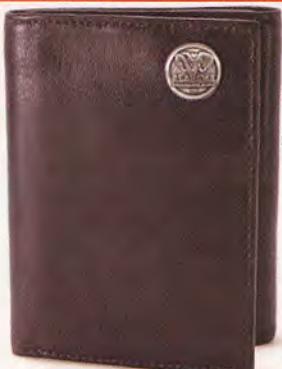


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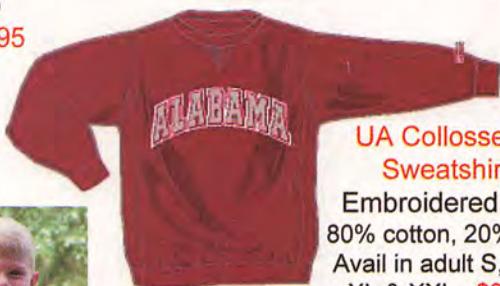
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2005 Alabama Winter Sports Schedules

Men's Basketball

Date	Opponent	CST Time
Nov. 10	Exhibition TBA	TBA
PRE-SEASON NIT		
Nov. 15	Miami-Ohio	TBA
Nov. 17	NIT second round TBA	TBA
Nov. 20	Alabama State	6:00
Nov. 23	NIT Semifinals	TBA
Nov. 25	NIT Finals	TBA
Nov. 29	Louisiana Tech	7:00
Dec. 3	Winthrop	7:00
Dec. 7	Notre Dame	6:00
Dec. 10	@ Temple	4:00
Dec. 17	Georgia state	7:00
Dec. 22	North Carolina State	8:00
Dec. 27	Jackson State	7:00
Dec. 31	@ Oklahoma	3:30
Jan. 2	Birmingham-Southern	7:30
Jan. 7	Ole Miss	5:00
Jan. 11	@ Auburn	7:00
Jan. 14	@ Kentucky	Noon
Jan. 18	Arkansas	7:00
Jan. 21	@ LSU	2:00
Jan. 28	Mississippi State	6:00
Feb. 1	@ Georgia	6:30
Feb. 4	LSU	Noon
Feb. 8	Vanderbilt	7:00
Feb. 11	@ Ole Miss	2:00
Feb. 14	@ South Carolina	2:00
Feb. 18	Tennessee	3:00
Feb. 21	@ Arkansas	8:00
Feb. 26	Florida	3:00
March 1	Auburn	7:00
March 4	Mississippi State	TBA
March 9-	SEC Tournament	
March 12	@ Nashville	

Women's Basketball

Date	Opponent	CST Time
Nov. 5	West Alabama	TBA
Nov. 11	Henderson State	7:00
Nov. 18	Washington	5:30
Nov. 21	Santa Clara	7:00
PARADISE JAM @ St. Thomas		
Nov. 25	Virginia	TBA
Nov. 26	Minnesota or Nevada	TBA
Dec. 1	Alabama A&M	7:00
Dec. 6	@ Alabama-B'ham	7:00
Dec. 10	SE Louisiana	7:00
Dec. 18	@ South Dakota State	2:00
Dec. 20	@ North Dakota State	7:00
Dec. 22	Georgia Southern	2:00
SOUTH ALABAMA CLASIC @ Mobile		
Dec. 29	South Alabama	8:00
Dec. 30	Southern	6:00
Jan. 2	East Carolina	5:30

Date	Opponent	CST Time
Jan. 5	@ Florida	6:00
Jan. 8	Auburn	2:00
Jan. 15	Arkansas	2:00
Jan. 19	@ LSU	7:00
Jan. 22	South Carolina	2:00
Jan. 26	@ Auburn	7:00
Jan. 29	@ Tennessee	2:00
Feb. 2	Vanderbilt	7:00
Feb. 5	@ Georgia	1:30
Feb. 9	Ole Miss (Fox South TV)	7:00
Feb. 12	@ Mississippi State	2:00
Feb. 19	Tennessee (CSS-TV)	Noon
Feb. 23	LSU	7:00
Feb. 26	@ Kentucky	2:00
March 2-	SEC Tournament	
March 5	@ Little Rock	

Men's & Women's Swimming & Diving

Date	Opponent	CST Time
Sept. 24	Alumni Meet	11:00
Oct. 14	Intrasquad Meet	5:00
Nov. 4	Tennessee	4:00
Nov. 5	@ Delta State	4:00
Nov. 18	@ Auburn	5:00
Nov. 30-	U.S. Open	All Day
Dec. 4	@ Auburn	
Jan. 7	LSU/Kentucky	1:00
Jan. 20	@ Florida/Arkansas	5:00
Jan. 28	@ South Carolina/Georgia	Noon
Feb. 15-	SEC Championships	All Day
Feb. 18	@ Knoxville	
Feb. 19	Volunteer Invite	All Day
Feb. 26	@ Georgia Last Chance	All Day
March 9-	NCAA Zone Diving	
March 12	@ TBA	
March 16-	Women's NCAA Championships	
March 18	@ Athens, Ga.	
March 23-	Men's NCAA Championships	
March 25	@ Atlanta	

Gymnastics

Date	Opponent	CST Time
Jan. 6	Super Six Challenge @ LSU (LSU, Alabama, Auburn, Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa State)	TBA
Jan. 14	Penn State & Arizona	TBA
Jan. 20	@ Penn State	
Jan. 27	Florida	7:30
Feb. 3	@ Auburn	7:00
Feb. 10	@ Kentucky	6:30
Feb. 17	Georgia	7:30
March 3	Arkansas	7:30
March 10	@ LSU	7:00
March 17	Stanford	7:30
March 25	Auburn	7:30
	SEC Championships	TBA
April 8	@ Birmingham	
April 20-22	NCAA Regionals	TBA
	NCAA Championships	TBA
	@ Oregon State	



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By Jamie Newberg, Scout.com National Recruiting Editor

Katrina Affects Tulane and LSU Recruiting

Perhaps the biggest recruiting story among all the teams in college football this year is the story of the Tulane Green Wave. Tulane, located in New Orleans, Louisiana, is a team on the move due to Hurricane Katrina. Like the NFL New Orleans Saints, they had to find a new home. First they shared the facilities with SMU in Dallas. Two weeks ago they moved to Ruston, La. and Louisiana Tech. The NCAA told Tulane they did not have to attend class this fall. Instead, the entire Green Wave football team enrolled in classes at Louisiana Tech.

"We will remain student athletes," said Tulane Head Coach Chris Scelfo. "Our kids are going to school no matter the circumstance. They (players) have kept their heads up and have had a great attitude regarding Katrina and the aftermath. Everyone remains on the team and they are upbeat. I love the direction of the team, program and school."

And it shows on the field. Tulane is off to a 2-2 start. That's a strong testament to the mental toughness of the Green Wave. They could have easily gone the other way because of Katrina.

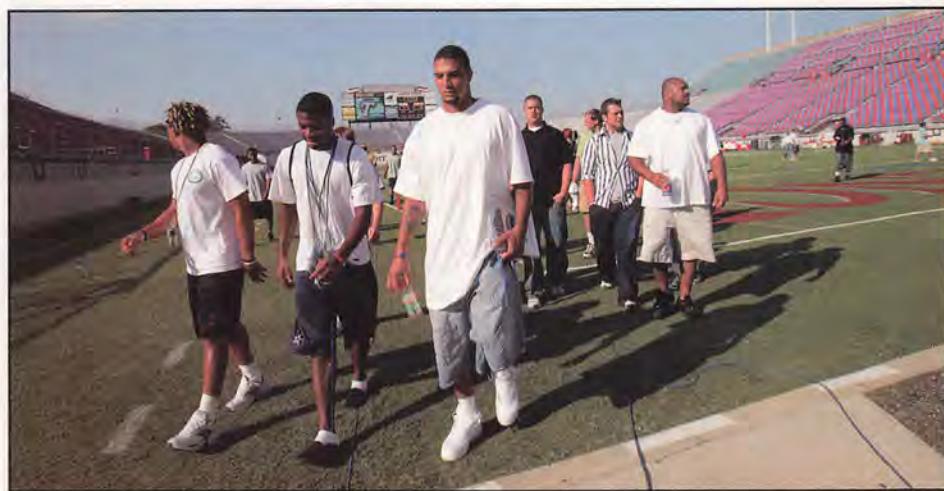
What will be a difficult task for the Green Wave will be to recruit over the next four plus months. National Signing Day is Wednesday, February 1st and the school is not scheduled to open back up until January 17th. That will leave Tulane only two precious weeks to host prospects on official visits. Meanwhile, the coaches continue to try and keep up with the prospects they were recruiting locally in New Orleans as well as Texas, Georgia and Florida. Many of the players they were recruiting in the Big Easy have been displaced. Tulane now has to recreate their recruiting lists from New Orleans and the surrounding areas.

"Almost 100% of the kids we were recruiting in the state we have had to track down," said Tulane Recruiting Coordinator Brad Smiley. "Kids went to different programs so all the kids and the coaches are just about gone. We are just now finding out where many of these players are resurfacing. Sometimes we find them by just reading the newspapers on Saturday."

Despite the difficult chore of having to run down all their prospective in-state recruits Coach Scelfo remains very optimistic about this recruiting class.

"We will get it done," said Scelfo. "It will be tough but we will get it done. Much of it will be trust but you know how I approach recruiting and nothing will change. We have a great staff and we will have to work a little extra hard."

To make matters worse Tulane works



The Tulane Green Wave football team arrives for a home game against the Mississippi State Bulldogs on September 17, 2005 at Independence Stadium in Shreveport, Louisiana. The Tulane Green Wave from New Orleans, Louisiana had to change venues due to the state of their city as a result of Hurricane Katrina. (Photo by Ronald Martinez/Getty Images)

off a small recruiting budget compared to that of a LSU or Texas. They have not been on the road this fall. Instead, they are using the phones, emails and text messaging as ways to communicate with the prospects.

"Our players will sell this school and this program once the kids get on our campus," proclaimed Scelfo. "The parents out there know that we take care of our kids. This year it was survival first and then production in the classroom and on the field."

Fitting that Scelfo and his staff will rely more than ever on his players to help recruit players for this signing call because more times than not your best recruiters are your players themselves.

So far Tulane is sitting on two commitments – quarterback Kevin Moore and defensive lineman Quencey Patrick.

"They (Tulane) were the first to recruit me and the first to offer me," said Moore. I feel real comfortable with that decision. The staff is great and they are open with you. They are a great group of guys. The academics are great at Tulane and they have quarterback tradition. I think their last three quarterbacks have been drafted in the NFL. It was a pretty easy decision and I am solid with Tulane despite the situation they are in right now because of the Hurricane."

While Moore committed to Tulane back in the summer Patrick committed to the Green Wave last week.

"I committed to Tulane last Wednesday," said Patrick. "I have a great relationship with

the coaches and I think I fit in best at Tulane. There was a little delay in my decision because of the Hurricane because I wanted to see what happened to the school. But everything is going to be fine."

An interesting note is that both commitments are from out-of-state prospects. Moore is from Texas and Patrick is from Georgia. Look for Tulane to sign 15-20 prospects for this recruiting class.

Meanwhile, in Baton Rouge, LSU has two problems that have arisen because of the hurricane but they pale in comparison to what Tulane has gone through. Like the Green Wave, the Tigers must re-create their prospect list of the kids they were recruiting in New Orleans, the surrounding areas and the Gulf Coast. But that list is much smaller than that of Tulane's. The other factor is that LSU has not had a Saturday game at Tiger Stadium in Baton Rouge yet. That's big for LSU because of the game day atmosphere there and all the prospects that make unofficial visits to their home games. But that will end this Saturday afternoon as the Tigers will host the Florida Gators.

"We are no where in the same situation as Tulane," said LSU Offensive Coordinator Jimbo Fisher. "We did have to answer a lot of questions from recruits and their parents about the hurricane and in the end that may help us a little bit. LSU and the city of Baton Rouge really lent a helping hand to everyone. Life is just about back to normal and people have adjusted. Right now, in terms of recruiting, the interest seems to be the same."

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